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A FAITHFUL

NARRATIVE

OF THE

SURPRISING WORK OF GOD,

IN THE

CONVERSION OF MANY HUNDRED SOULS,

IN NORTHAMPTON,

AND THE NEIGHBOURING TOWNS AND VILLAGES OF NEW-HAMPSHIRE, IN NEW-ENGLAND;

IN A

Letter to the Rev. Dr. Colman, of Boston.

PREFACE BY THE FIRST EDITORS,

Dr. ISAAC WATTS, AND Dr. JOHN GUYSE.

The friendly correspondence which we maintain with our brethren of New England, gives us now and then the pleasure of hearing some remarkable instances of divine grace in the conversion of sinners, and some eminent examples of piety in that American part of the world. But never did we hear or read, since the first ages of christianity, any event of this kind so surprising as the present Narrative hath set before us. The Rev. and worthy Dr. Colman of Boston, had given us some short intimations of it in his letters; and upon our request of a more large and particular account, Mr. Edwards, the happy and successful minister of Northampton, which was one of the chief scenes of these wonders, drew up this history in an epistle to Dr. Colman.

There were some useful sermons of the venerable and aged Mr. Wm. Williams, published late in New England, which were preached in that part of the country during this season of the glorious work of God in the conversion of men; to which Dr. Colman subjoined a most judicious and accurate abridgment of this epistle: and a little after, by Mr. Edwards' request, he sent the original to our hands, to be communicated to the world under our care here in London.

We are abundantly satisfied of the truth of this narrative, not only from the pious character of the writer, but from the concurrent testimony of many other persons in New England; *for this thing was not done in a corner.* There is a spot of ground, as we are here informed, wherein there are twelve or fourteen towns and villages, chiefly situate in New Hampshire, near the banks of the river of Connecticut, within the compass of thirty miles, wherein it pleased God, two years ago, to display his free and sovereign mercy in the conversion of a great multitude of souls in a short space of time, turning them from a formal, cold, and careless profession of christianity to the lively exercise of every christian grace, and the powerful practice of our holy religion. The great God has seemed to act over again the miracle of Gideon's fleece, which was plentifully watered with the dew of heaven, while the rest of the earth round about it was dry, and had no such remarkable blessing.

There has been a great and just complaint for many years among the ministers and churches in Old England, and in New (except about the time of the late earthquake there) that the work of conversion goes on very slowly, that the spirit of God in his saving influences is much withdrawn from the ministrations of his word, and there are few that receive the report of the Gospel, with any eminent success upon their hearts. But as the Gospel is the same divine instrument of grace still, as ever it was in the days of the apostles so our ascended Saviour now and then takes a special occasion to manifest the divinity of this gospel by a plentiful effusion of his spirit where it is preached: then sinners are turned into saints in numbers, and there is a new face of things spread over a town or a country. "The wilderness and the solitary places are glad, the desert rejoices and blossoms as the rose;" and surely concerning this instance we may add, that "they have seen the glory of the Lord there, and the excellency of our God; they have seen the outgoings of God our King in his sanctuary."

Certainly it becomes us, who profess the religion of Christ, to take notice of such astonishing exercises of his power and mercy, and give him the glory which is due, when he begins to accomplish any of his promises concerning the latter days: and it gives us further encouragement to pray, and wait, and hope for the like display of his power in the midst of us. *The hand of God is not shortened that it cannot save*, but we have reason to fear that our *iniquities*, our coldness in religion, and the general carnality of our spirits, have raised a wall of separation between God and us: and we may add, the pride and perverse humour of infidelity, degeneracy, and apostacy from the Christian faith, which have of late years broken out amongst us, seem to have provoked the spirit of Christ to absent himself much from our nation. "Return, O Lord and visit thy churches, and revive thine own work in the midst of us."

From such blessed instances of the success of the gospel, as appear in this narrative, we may learn much of the way of the Spirit of God in his dealing with the souls of men, in order to convince sinners, and restore them to his favour and his image, by Jesus Christ his Son. We acknowledge that some particular appearances in the work of conversion among men may be occasioned by the ministry which they sit under, whether it be of a more or less evangelical strain, whether it be more severe and affrighting, or more gentle and persuasive. But wheresoever God works with power for salvation upon the minds of men, there will be some discoveries of a sense of sin, of the danger of the wrath of God, and the all-sufficiency of his Son Jesus, to relieve us under all our spiritual wants and distresses, and a hearty consent of soul to receive him in the various offices of grace, wherein he is set forth in the holy scriptures. And if our readers had opportunity (as we have had) to peruse several of the sermons which were preached during this glorious season, we should find that it is the common plain Protestant doctrine of the Reformation, without stretching towards the Antinomians on the one side, or the Arminians on the other, that the spirit of God has been pleased to honour with such illustrious success.

We are taught also by this happy event how easy it will be for our blessed Lord to make a full accomplishment of all his predictions concerning his kingdom, and to spread his dominion from sea to sea, through all the nations of the earth. We see how easy it is for him with one turn of his hand, with one word of his mouth, to awaken whole countries of stupid and sleeping sinners, and kindle divine life in their souls. The heavenly influence shall run from door to door, filling the hearts and lips of every inhabitant with importunate inquiries, *What shall we do to be saved?* And *how shall we escape the wrath to come?* And the name of Christ the Saviour shall diffuse itself like a rich and vital perfume to multitudes that were ready to sink and perish under the painful sense of their own guilt and danger. Salvation shall spread through all the tribes and ranks of mankind, as the lightning from heaven in a few moments would communicate a living flame through ten thousand lamps and torches placed in a proper situation and neighbourhood. Thus *a nation shall be born in a day* when our Redeemer please, and his faithful and obedient subjects shall become as numerous as the spires of grass in a meadow newly mown, and refreshed with the showers of heaven. But the pleasure of this agreeable hint bears the mind away from our theme.

Let us return to the present narrative: It is worthy of our observation, that this great and surprising work does not seem to have taken its rise from any sudden and distressing calamity of public terror that might universally impress the minds of a people: here was no storm, no earthquake, no inundation of water, no desolation by fire, no pestilence or any other sweeping distemper, nor any cruel invasion by their Indian neighbours that might force the inhabitants into a serious thoughtfulness, and a religious temper by the fears of approaching death and judgment. Such scenes as these have sometimes been made happily effectual to awaken sinners in Zion, and the formal professor and hypocrite have been terrified with the thoughts of divine wrath breaking in upon them, *Who shall dwell with everlasting burnings?* But in the present case the immediate hand of God in the work of his Spirit appears much more evident because there is no such awful and threatening Providence attending it.

It is worthy also of our further notice, that when many profane sinners, and formal professors of religion have been affrighted out of their present carelessness and stupidity by some astonishing terrors approaching them, those religious appearances have not been so durable, nor the real change of heart so thoroughly affected: many of this sort of sudden converts have dropped their religious concerns in a great measure when their fears of the threatening calamity were vanished. But it is a blessed confirmation of the truth of this present work of grace, that the persons who were divinely wrought upon in this season continue still to profess serious religion, and to practise it without returning to their former follies.

It may not be amiss in this place to take notice, that a very surprising and threatening providence has this last year attended the people of Northampton, among whom this work of divine grace was so remarkable: which Providence at first might have been construed by the unthinking world to be a signal token of God's displeasure

against that town, or a judgment from heaven upon the people; but soon afterwards, like Paul's shaking the viper off from his hand, it discovered the astonishing care and goodness of God expressed towards a place where such a multitude of young converts were assembled: nor can we give a better account of it than in the language of this very gentleman, the Rev. Mr. Edwards, minister of that town, who wrote the following Letter, which was published in New England.

NORTHAMPTON, *March* 19, 1737.

"We in this town, were the last Lord's Day the spectators, and many of us the subjects, of one of the most amazing instances of divine preservation, that perhaps was ever known in the land. Our meeting house is old and decayed, so that we have been for some time building a new one, which is yet unfinished. It has been observed of late, that the house we have hitherto met in, has gradually spread at bottom; the cells and walls giving way, especially in the foreside, by reason of the weight of timber at top, pressing on the braces that are inserted into the posts and beams of the house. It has done so more than ordinarily this spring; which seems to have been occasioned by the heaving of the ground through the extreme frosts of the winter past, and its now settling again on that side which is next the sun, by the spring thaws. By this means the underpinning has been considerably disordered; which people were not sensible of till the ends of the joists which bore up the front gallery, were drawn off from the girts on which they rested by the walls giving way. So that in the midst of the public exercise in the forenoon, soon after the beginning of sermon, the whole gallery—full of people, with all the seats and timber, suddenly and without any warning—sunk, and fell down with the most amazing noise upon the heads of those that sat under, to the astonishment of the congregation. The house was filled with dolorous shrieking and crying; and nothing else was expected than to find many people dead, and dashed to pieces.

"The gallery in falling seemed to break and sink first in the middle; so that those who were upon it were thrown together in heaps before the front door. But the whole was so sudden, that many of them who fell, knew nothing at the time what it was that had befallen them. Others in the congregation thought it had been an amazing clap of thunder. The fallen gallery seemed to be broken all to pieces before it got down; so that some who fell with it as well as those who were under, were buried in the ruins; and were found pressed under heavy loads of timber, and could do nothing to help themselves.

"But so mysteriously and wonderfully did it come to pass, that every life was preserved; and though many were greatly bruised, and their flesh torn, yet there is not, as I can understand, one bone broken or so much as put out of joint, among them all. Some who were thought to be almost dead at first, were greatly recovered; and but one young woman seems yet to remain in dangerous circumstances, by an inward hurt in her breast, but of late there appears more hope of her recovery.

"None can give account, or conceive, by what means people's

lives and limbs should be thus preserved, when so great a multitude were thus imminently exposed. It looked as though it was impossible but that great numbers must instantly be crushed to death, or dashed in pieces. It seems unreasonable to ascribe it to any thing else but the care of Providence, in disposing the motions of every piece of timber, and the precise place of safety where every one should sit, and fall, when none were in any capacity to care for their own preservation. The preservation seems to be most wonderful, with respect to the women and children in the middle alley, under the gallery, where it came down first, and with greatest force, and where there was nothing to break the force of the falling weight.

"Such an event may be a sufficient argument of a divine Providence over the lives of men. We thought ourselves called to set apart a day to be spent in the solemn worship of God, to humble ourselves under such a rebuke of God upon us in time of public service in his house by so dangerous and surprising an accident; and to praise his name for so wonderful, and as it were miraculous a preservation. The last Wednesday was kept by us to that end; and a mercy in which the hand of God is so remarkably evident, may be well worthy to affect the hearts of all who hear it."

Thus far the letter.

But it is time to conclude our Preface. If there should be any thing found in this narrative of the surprising conversion of such numbers of souls, where the sentiments or the style of the relater or his inferences from matters of fact, do not appear so agreeable to every reader, we hope it will have no unhappy influence to discourage the belief of this glorious event. We must allow every writer his own way; and must allow him to choose what particular instances he would select from the numerous cases which came before him. And though he might have chosen others perhaps, of more significancy in the eye of the world, than the *woman* and the *child*, whose experiences he relates at large; yet it is evident he chose that of the woman, because she was dead, and she is thereby incapable of knowing any honours or reproaches on this account. And as for the child, those who were present and saw and heard such a remarkable and lasting change, on one so very young, must necessarily receive a stronger impression from it, and a more agreeable surprise than the mere narration of it can communicate to others at a distance. Children's language always loses its striking beauties at second-hand.

Upon the whole, whatever defect any reader may find, or imagine in this narrative, we are well satisfied, that such an eminent work of God ought not to be concealed from the world: and as it was the reverend author's opinion, so we declare it to be ours also, that it is very likely that this account of such an extraordinary and illustrious appearance of divine grace in the conversion of sinners, may, by the blessing of God, have a happy effect upon the minds of men, towards the honour and enlargement of the kingdom of Christ, much more than any supposed imperfection in this representation of it can do injury.

May the worthy writer of this epistle, and all those his reverend brethren in the ministry, who have been honoured in this excellent and important service, go on to see their labours crowned with daily

and persevering success! May the numerous subjects of this surprising work hold fast what they have received, and increase in every christian grace and blessing! May a plentiful effusion of the blessed Spirit, also, descend on the British isles, and all their American plantations, to renew the face of religion there! And we intreat our readers in both Englands, to join with us in our hearty addresses to the throne of grace, that this wonderful discovery of the hand of God in saving sinners, may encourage our faith and hope of the accomplishment of all his words of grace, which are written in the Old Testament and in the New, concerning the large extent of this salvation in the latter days of the world. *Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly,* and spread thy dominion through all the ends of the earth. *Amen.*

LONDON,
Oct. 12, 1737.

ISAAC WATTS,
JOHN GUYSE.

FAITHFUL NARRATIVE.

Rev. and Honoured Sir,

HAVING seen your letter to my honoured uncle Williams of Hatfield, of July 20, wherein you inform him of the notice that has been taken of the late wonderful work of God, in this and some other towns in this country, by the Rev. Dr. Watts and Dr Guyse of London, and the congregation to which the last of these preached on a monthly day of solemn prayer; as also of your desire to be more perfectly acquainted with it by some of us on the spot: and having been since informed by my uncle Williams that you desire me to undertake it; I would now do it, in as just and faithful a manner as in me lies.

SECT. I.

A general Introductory Statement.

The people of the country, in general, I suppose, are as sober, orderly, and good sort of people, as in any part of New England; and I believe they have been preserved the freest by far of any part of the country, from error and variety of sects and opinions. Our being so far within the land, at a distance from sea-ports, and in a corner of the country, has doubtless been one reason why we have not been so much corrupted with vice, as most other parts. But without question, the religion and good order of the county, and

purity in doctrine, has, under God, been very much owing to the great abilities, and eminent piety, of my venerable and honoured grandfather Stoddard. I suppose we have been the freest of any part of the land from unhappy divisions and quarrels in our ecclesiastical and religious affairs, till the late lamentable Springfield contention.*

Being much separated from other parts of the province, and having comparatively but little intercourse with them, we have always managed our ecclesiastical affairs within ourselves. It is the way in which the country, from its infancy, has gone on, by the practical agreement of all; and the way in which our peace and good order has hitherto been maintained.

The town of Northampton is of about 82 years standing, and has now about 200 families; which mostly dwell more compactly together than any town of such a size in these parts of the country. This probably has been an occasion, that both our corruptions and reformations have been, from time to time, the more swiftly propagated from one to another through the town. Take the town in general, and so far as I can judge, they are as rational and intelligent a people as most I have been acquainted with. Many of them have been noted for religion; and particularly remarkable for their distinct knowledge in things that relate to heart religion, and christian experience, and their great regards thereto.

I am the third minister who has been settled in the town. The Rev. Mr. Eleazer Mather, who was the first, was ordained in July, 1669. He was one whose heart was much in his work, and abundant in labours for the good of precious souls. He had the high esteem and great love of his people, and was blessed with no small success. The Rev. Mr. Stoddard who succeeded him, came first to the town the November after his death; but was not ordained till September 11, 1672, and died February 11, 1728—9. So that he continued in the work of the ministry here, from his first coming to town, near 60 years. And as he was eminent and renowned for his gifts and grace: so he was blessed, from the beginning, with extraordinary success in his ministry, in the conversion of many souls. He had *five harvests*, as he called them. The first was about 57 years ago; the second about 53; the third about 40; the fourth about 24; the fifth and last about 18 years ago. Some of these times were much more remarkable than others, and the ingathering of souls more plentiful. Those about 53, and 40, and

* The Springfield Contention relates to the settlement of a minister there, which occasioned too warm debates between some, both pastors and people, that were for it, and others that were against it, on account of their different apprehensions about his principles, and about some steps that were taken to procure his ordination.

24 years ago, were much greater than either the first or the last: but in each of them, I have heard my grandfather say, the greater part of the young people in the town seemed to be mainly concerned for their eternal salvation.

After the last of these came a far more degenerate time, (at least among the young people) I suppose, than ever before. Mr. Stoddard, indeed, had the comfort, before he died, of seeing a time where there were no small appearances of a divine work among some, and a considerable ingathering of souls, even after I was settled with him in the ministry, which was about two years before his death; and I have reason to bless God for the great advantage I had by it. In these two years there were nearly twenty that Mr. Stoddard hoped to be savingly converted; but there was nothing of any general awakening. The greater part seemed to be at that time very insensible of the things of religion, and engaged in other cares and pursuits. Just after my grandfather's death, it seemed to be a time of extraordinary dulness in religion. Licentiousness for some years greatly prevailed among the youth of the town; they were many of them very much addicted to night-walking, and frequenting the tavern, and lewd practices, wherein some, by their example, exceedingly corrupted others. It was their manner very frequently to get together, in conventions of both sexes, for mirth and jollity, which they called frolics; and they would often spend the greater part of the night in them, without regard to any order in the families they belonged to; and indeed family government did too much fail in the town. It was become very customary with many of our young people to be indecent in their carriage at meeting, which doubtless would not have prevailed in such a degree, had it not been that my grandfather through his great age, (though he retained his powers surprisingly to the last) was not so able to observe them. There had also long prevailed in the town a spirit of contention between two parties, into which they had for many years been divided; by which they maintained a jealousy one of the other, and were prepared to oppose one another in all public affairs.

But in two or three years after Mr. Stoddard's death, there began to be a sensible amendment of these evils. The young people shewed more of a disposition to hearken to counsel, and by degrees left off their frolics; they grew observably more decent in their attendance on the public worship, and there were more who manifested a religious concern than there used to be.

At the latter end of the year 1733, there appeared a very unusual flexibleness, and yielding to advice, in our young people. It had been too long their manner to make the evening

after the sabbath,* and after our public lecture, to be especially the times of their mirth, and company-keeping. But a sermon was now preached on the sabbath before the lecture, to shew the evil tendency of the practice, and to persuade them to reform it; and it was urged on heads of families that it should be a thing agreed upon among them, to govern their families, and keep their children at home, at these times. It was also more privately moved, that they should meet together the next day, in their several neighbourhoods, to know each other's minds; which was accordingly done, and the motion complied with throughout the town. But parents found little or no occasion for the exercise of government in the case. The young people declared themselves convinced by what they had heard from the pulpit, and were willing of themselves to comply with the counsel that had been given: and it was immediately, and, I suppose, almost universally complied with; and there was a thorough reformation of these disorders thenceforward, which has continued ever since.

Presently after this, there began to appear a remarkable religious concern at a little village belonging to the congregation, called Pascommuck, where a few families were settled, at about three miles distance from the main body of the town. At this place a number of persons seemed to be savingly wrought upon. In the April following, anno 1734, there happened a very sudden and awful death of a young man in the bloom of his youth; who being violently seized with the pleurisy, and taken immediately very delirious, died in about two days; which (together with what was preached publicly on that occasion) much affected many young people. This was followed with another death of a young married woman, who had been considerably exercised in mind about the salvation of her soul, before she was ill, and was in great distress, in the beginning of her illness: but seemed to have satisfying evidences of God's saving mercy to her, before her death: so that she died very full of comfort, in a most earnest and moving manner, warning and counselling others. This served to contribute to render solemn the spirits of many young persons; and there began evidently to appear more of a religious concern on people's minds.

In the fall of the year I proposed it to the young people, that they should agree among themselves to spend the evenings after lectures in social religion, and to that end divide themselves into several companies to meet in various parts of the town; which was accordingly done, and those meetings have been since continued, and the example imitated by elder people.

* It must be noted, that it has never been our manner to observe the evening that follows the sabbath; but that which precedes it, as part of the holy time.

This was followed with the death of an elderly person, which was attended with many unusual circumstances, by which many were much moved and affected.

About this time began the great noise, in this part of the country, about Arminianism, which seemed to appear with a very threatening aspect upon the interest of religion here. The friends of vital piety trembled for fear of the issue; but it seemed, contrary to their fear, strongly to be over-ruled for the promoting of religion. Many who looked on themselves as in a Christless condition, seemed to be awakened by it, with fear that God was about to withdraw from the land, and that we should be given up to heterodoxy and corrupt principles; and that then their opportunity for obtaining salvation would be past. Many who were brought a little to doubt about the truth of the doctrines they had hitherto been taught, seemed to have a kind of trembling fear with their doubts, lest they should be led into by-paths, to their eternal undoing; and they seemed; with much concern and engagedness of mind, to enquire what was indeed the way in which they must come to be accepted with God. There were some things said publicly on that occasion, concerning justification by faith alone.

Although great fault was found with meddling with the controversy in the pulpit, by such a person, and at that time—and though it was ridiculed by many elsewhere—yet it proved a word spoken in season here; and was most evidently attended with a very remarkable blessing of heaven to the souls of the people in this town. They received thence a general satisfaction, with respect to the main thing in question, which they had been in trembling doubts and concern about; and their minds were engaged the more earnestly to seek that they might come to be accepted of God, and saved in the way of the gospel, which had been made evident to them to be the true and only way. And then it was, in the latter part of December, that the spirit of God began extraordinarily to set in, and wonderfully to work amongst us; and there were, very suddenly, one after another, five or six persons, who were to all appearance savingly converted, and some of them wrought upon in a very remarkable manner.

Particularly, I was surprised with the relation of a young woman, who had been one of the greatest company-keepers in the whole town. When she came to me, I had never heard that she was become in any wise serious, but by the conversation I then had with her, it appeared to me, that what she gave an account of, was a glorious work of God's infinite power and sovereign grace; and that God had given her a new heart, truly broken and sanctified. I could not then doubt of it, and have seen much in my acquaintance with her since to confirm it.

Though the work was glorious, yet I was filled with concern about the effect it might have upon others. I was ready to conclude, (though too rashly) that some would be hardened by it, in carelessness and looseness of life; and would take occasion from it to open their mouths in reproaches of religion. But the event was the reverse, to a wonderful degree. God made it, I suppose, the greatest occasion of awakening to others, of any thing that ever came to pass in the town. I have had abundant opportunity to know the effect it had, by my private conversation with many. The news of it seemed to be almost like a flash of lightning, upon the hearts of young people, all over the town, and upon many others. Those persons amongst us, who used to be farthest from seriousness, and that I most feared would make an ill improvement of it, seemed greatly to be awakened with it. Many went to talk with her, concerning what she had met with; and what appeared in her seemed to be to the satisfaction of all that did so.

Presently upon this, a great and earnest concern about the great things of religion, and the eternal world, became universal in all parts of the town, and among persons of all degrees, and all ages. The noise amongst the dry bones waxed louder and louder; all other talk but about spiritual and eternal things was soon thrown by; all the conversation, in all companies and upon all occasions, was upon these things only, unless so much as was necessary for people carrying on their ordinary secular business. Other discourse than of the things of religion, would scarcely be tolerated in any company. The minds of people were wonderfully taken off from the world, it was treated amongst us as a thing of very little consequence. They seemed to follow their worldly business, more as a part of their duty, than from any disposition they had to it; the temptation now seemed to lie on that hand, to neglect worldly affairs too much, and to spend too much time in the immediate exercise of religion. This was exceedingly misrepresented by reports that were spread in distant parts of the land, as though the people here had wholly thrown by all worldly business, and betook themselves entirely to reading and praying, and such like religious exercises.

But although people did not ordinarily neglect their worldly business; yet Religion was with all sorts the great concern, and the world was a thing only by the bye. The only thing in their view was to get the kingdom of heaven, and every one appeared pressing into it. The engagedness of their hearts in this great concern could not be hid, it appeared in their very countenances. It then was a dreadful thing amongst us to lie out of Christ, in danger every day of dropping into hell; and what persons minds were intent upon, was to escape for their lives, and to fly from the wrath to come.

All would eagerly lay hold of opportunities for their souls; and were wont very often to meet together in private houses, for religious purposes: and such meetings when appointed were greatly thronged.

There was scarcely a single person in the town, old or young, left unconcerned about the great things of the eternal world. Those who were wont to be the vainest, and loosest; and those who had been most disposed to think, and speak slightly of vital and experimental religion, were now generally subject to great awakenings. And the work of conversion was carried on in a most astonishing manner, and increased more and more; souls did as it were come by flocks to Jesus Christ. From day to day, for many months together, might be seen evident instances of sinners brought out of darkness into marvellous light, and delivered out of a horrible pit, and from the miry clay, and set upon a rock with a new song of praise to God in their mouths.

This work of God, as it was carried on, and the number of true saints multiplied, soon made a glorious alteration in the town; so that in the spring and summer following, anno 1735, the town seemed to be full of the presence of God: it never was so full of love, nor of joy, and yet so full of distress, as it was then. There were remarkable tokens of God's presence in almost every house. It was a time of joy in families on account of salvation being brought unto them; parents rejoicing over their children as new born, and husbands over their wives, and wives over their husbands. The goings of God were then seen in his sanctuary, God's day was a delight, and his tabernacles were amiable. Our public assemblies were then beautiful; the congregation was alive in God's service, every one earnestly intent on the public worship, every hearer eager to drink in the words of the minister as they came from his mouth; the assembly in general were, from time to time, in tears while the word was preached; some weeping with sorrow and distress, others with joy and love, others with pity and concern for the souls of their neighbours.

Our public praises were then greatly enlivened; God was then served in our psalmody, in some measure in the beauty of holiness. It has been observable, that there has been scarce any part of divine worship, wherein good men amongst us have had grace so drawn forth, and their hearts so lifted up in the ways of God, as in singing his praises. Our congregation excelled all that ever I knew in the external part of the duty before, the men generally carrying regularly, and well, three parts of music, and the women a part by themselves; but now they were evidently wont to sing with unusual elevation of heart and voice, which made the duty pleasant indeed.

In all companies, on other days, on whatever occasions

persons met together, Christ was to be heard of and seen in the midst of them. Our young people when they met, were wont to spend the time in talking of the excellency and dying love of Jesus Christ, the glory of the way of salvation, the wonderful, free, and sovereign grace of God, his glorious work in the conversion of a soul, the truth and certainty of the great things of God's word, the sweetness of the views of his perfections, &c. And even at weddings, which formerly were mere occasions of mirth and jollity, there was now no discourse of any thing but religion, and no appearance of any but spiritual mirth. Those amongst us who had been formerly converted, were greatly enlivened, and renewed with fresh and extraordinary incomes of the spirit of God; though some much more than others, according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Many who before had laboured under difficulties about their own state, had now their doubts removed by more satisfying experience, and more clear discoveries of God's love.

When this work first appeared, and was so extraordinarily carried on amongst us in the winter, others round about us seemed not to know what to make of it. Many scoffed at and ridiculed it; and some compared what we called conversion, to certain distempers. But it was very observable of many, who occasionally came amongst us from abroad with disregardful hearts, that what they saw here cured them of such a temper of mind. Strangers were generally surprised to find things so much beyond what they had heard, and were wont to tell others that the state of the town could not be conceived of by those who had not seen it. The notice that was taken of it by the people who came to town on occasion of the court that sat here in the beginning of March, was very observable. And those who came from the neighbourhood to our public lectures, were for the most part remarkably affected. Many who came to town, on one occasion or other, had their consciences smitten, and awakened; and went home with wounded hearts, and with those impressions that never wore off till they had hopefully a saving issue; and those who before had serious thoughts, had their awakenings and convictions greatly increased. There were many instances of persons who came from abroad on visits, or on business, who had not been long here before, to all appearance, they were savingly wrought upon; and partook of that shower of divine blessing which God rained down here, and went home rejoicing; till at length the same work began evidently to appear and prevail in several other towns in the county.

In the month of March, the people in South-Hadley began to be seized with deep concern about the things of religion; which very soon became universal. The work of God has been

very wonderful there; not much, if any thing, short of what it has been here, in proportion to the size of the place. About the same time, it began to break forth in the west part of Suffield, (where it also has been very great) and it soon spread into all parts of the town. It next appeared at Sunderland, and soon overspread the town; and I believe was for a season, not less remarkable than it was here. About the same time it began to appear in a part of Deerfield, called Green River, and afterwards filled the town, and there has been a glorious work there. It began also to be manifest in the south part of Hatfield, in a place called the Hill, and the whole town, in the second week in April, seemed to be seized, as it were at once, with concern about the things of religion; and the work of God has been great there. There has been also a very general awakening at West-Springfield and Long Meadow; and in Enfield there was for a time a pretty general concern amongst some who before had been very loose persons. About the same time that this appeared at Enfield, the Rev. Mr. Bull of Westfield, informed me, that there had been a great alteration there, and that more had been done in one week than in seven years before. Something of this work likewise appeared in the first precinct in Springfield, principally in the north and south extremes of the parish. And in Hadley old town, there gradually appeared so much of a work of God on souls, as at another time would have been thought worthy of much notice. For a short time there was also a very great and general concern of the like nature at Northfield. And wherever this concern appeared, it seemed not to be in vain; but in every place God brought saving blessings with him, and his word attended with his spirit (as we have all reason to think) returned not void. It might well be said at that time, in all parts of the country, "who are these that fly as a cloud, and as doves to their windows?"

As what other towns heard of and found in this, was a great means of awakening them; so our hearing of such a swift and extraordinary propagation, and extent of this work, did doubtless for a time serve to uphold the work amongst us. The continual news kept alive the talk of religion, and did greatly quicken and rejoice the hearts of God's people, and much awakened those who looked on themselves as still left behind, and made them the more earnest that they also might share in the great blessings that others had obtained.

This remarkable pouring out of the Spirit of God, which thus extended from one end to the other of this county, was not confined to it, but many places in Connecticut have partaken in the same mercy. For instance, the first parish in Windsor, under the pastoral care of the Rev. Mr. Marsh, was thus blest about the same time as we in Northampton, while

we had no knowledge of each other's circumstances. There has been a very great ingathering of souls to Christ in that place, and something considerable of the same work begun afterwards in East Windsor, my honoured father's parish, which has in times past been a place favoured with mercies of this nature, above any on this western side of New England, excepting Northampton; there having been four or five seasons of the pouring out of the spirit to the general awakening of the people there, since my father's settlement amongst them.

There was also the last spring and summer a wonderful work of God carried on at Coventry, under the ministry of the Rev. Mr. Meacham. I had opportunity to converse with some Coventry people, who gave me a very remarkable account of the surprising change that appeared in the most rude and vicious persons there. The like was also very great at the same time in a part of Lebanon, called the Crank, where the Rev. Mr. Wheelock, a young gentleman, is lately settled: and there has been much of the same at Durham, under the ministry of the Rev. Mr. Chauncey; and to appearance no small ingathering of souls there. Likewise amongst many of the young people in the first precinct in Stratford, under the ministry of the Rev. Mr. Gould; where the work was much promoted by the remarkable conversion of a young woman who had been a great company-keeper, as it was here.

Something of this work appeared in several other towns in those parts, as I was informed when I was there the last fall. And we have since been acquainted with something very remarkable of this nature at another parish in Stratford, called Ripton, under the pastoral care of the Rev. Mr. Mills. There was a considerable revival of religion last summer at Newhaven old town, as I was once and again informed by the Rev. Mr. Noyes, the minister there, and by others: and by a letter which I very lately received from Mr. Noyes, and also by information, we have had other ways. This flourishing of religion still continues, and has lately much increased. Mr. Noyes writes, that many this summer have been added to the church, and particularly mentions several young persons that belong to the principal families of that town.

There has been a degree of the same work at a part of Guildford; and very considerable at Mansfield, under the ministry of the Rev. Mr. Eleazar Williams; and an unusual religious concern at Tolland; and something of it at Hebron and Bolton. There was also no small effusion of the spirit of God in the north parish in Preston, in the eastern part of Connecticut, of which I was informed, and saw something, when I was the last autumn at the house, and in the congregation of the Rev. Mr. Lord, the minister there; who, with the Rev. Mr. Owen, of Groton, came up hither in May, the last

year, on purpose to see the work of God. Having heard various and contradictory accounts of it, they were careful when here to satisfy themselves; and to that end particularly conversed with many of our people; which they declared to be entirely to their satisfaction, and that the one half had not been told them, nor could be told them. Mr. Lord told me that when he got home, he informed his congregation of what he had seen, and that they were greatly affected with it; and it proved the beginning of the same work amongst them, which prevailed till there was a general awakening, and many instances of persons, who seemed to be remarkably converted. I also have lately heard that there has been something of the same work at Woodbury.

But this shower of divine blessing has been yet more extensive: there was no small degree of it in some parts of the Jerseys; as I was informed when I was at New-York, (in a long journey I took at that time of the year for my health) by some people of the Jerseys, whom I saw. Especially the Rev. William Tennent, a minister who seemed to have such things much at heart, told me of a very great awakening of many in a place called the Mountains, under the ministry of one Mr. Cross; and of a very considerable revival of religion in another place under the ministry of his brother the Rev. Gilbert Tennent; and also at another place, under the ministry of a very pious young gentleman, a Dutch minister, whose name as I remember was Freelinghousa.

This seems to have been a very extraordinary dispensation of providence; God has in many respects gone out of, and much beyond his usual and ordinary way. The work in this town, and some others about us, has been extraordinary on account of the universality of it, affecting all sorts, sober and vicious, high and low, rich and poor, wise and unwise. It reached the most considerable families and persons, to all appearance, as much as others. In former stirrings of this nature, the bulk of the young people have been greatly affected; but old men and little children have been so now. Many of the last have, of their own accord, formed themselves into religious societies, in different parts of the town. A loose careless person could scarcely be found in the whole neighbourhood; and if there was any one that seemed to remain senseless or unconcerned, it would be spoken of as a strange thing.

This dispensation has also appeared very extraordinary in the numbers of those on whom we have reason to hope it has had a saving effect. We have about six hundred and twenty communicants, which include almost all our adult persons. The church was very large before; but persons never thronged into it, as they did in the late extraordinary time.—Our sacraments are eight weeks asunder, and I received into our

communion about a hundred before one sacrament, fourscore of them at one time, whose appearance, when they presented themselves together to make an open explicit profession of christianity, was very affecting to the congregation. I took in near sixty before the next sacrament day: and I had very sufficient evidence of the conversion of their souls, through divine grace, though it is not the custom here, as it is in many other churches in this country, to make a credible relation of their inward experience the ground of admission to the Lord's Supper.

I am far from pretending to be able to determine how many have lately been the subjects of such mercy; but if I may be allowed to declare any thing that appears to me probable in a thing of this nature, I hope that more than 300 souls were savingly brought home to Christ, in this town, in the space of half a year, and about the same number of males as females. By what I have heard Mr. Stoddard say, this was far from what has been usual in years past; for he observed that in his time, many more women were converted than men. Those of our young people who are on other accounts most considerable, are mostly, as I hope, truly pious, and leading persons in the ways of religion. Those who were formerly loose young persons, are generally, to all appearance, become true lovers of God and Christ, and spiritual in their dispositions. I hope that by far the greater part of persons in this town, above sixteen years of age, are such as have the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. By what I have heard I suppose it is so in some other places; particularly at Sunderland and South Hadley.

This has also appeared to be a very extraordinary dispensation, in that the spirit of God has so much extended not only his awakening, but regenerating influences, both to elderly persons, and also to those who are very young. It has been heretofore rarely heard of, that any were converted past middle age; but now we have the same ground to think, that many such have at this time been savingly changed, as that others have been so in more early years. I suppose there were upwards of fifty persons converted in this town above forty years of age; more than twenty of them above fifty; about ten of them above sixty; and two of them above seventy years of age.

It has heretofore been looked on as a strange thing, when any have seemed to be savingly wrought upon, and remarkably changed in their childhood. But now, I suppose, near thirty were, to appearance, savingly wrought upon, between ten and fourteen years of age; two between nine and ten, and one of about four years of age; and because I suppose this last will be with most difficulty believed, I will hereafter

give a particular account of it. The influences of God's Holy Spirit have also been very remarkable on children in some other places; particularly at Sunderland, South Hadley, and the west part of Suffield. There are several families in this town who are all hopefully pious. Yea, there are several numerous families, in which, I think, we have reason to hope that all the children are truly godly, and most of them lately become so. There are very few houses in the whole town, into which salvation has not lately come, in one or more instances. There are several negroes, who from what was seen in them then, and what is discernible in them since, appear to have been truly born again in the late remarkable season.

God has also seemed to have gone out of his usual way, in the quickness of his work, and the swift progress his Spirit has made in his operations on the hearts of many. It is wonderful that persons should be so suddenly, and yet so greatly changed. Many have been taken from a loose and careless way of living, and seized with strong convictions of their guilt and misery, and in a very little time old things have passed away, and all things have become new with them.

God's work has also appeared very extraordinary in the degrees of his influences; in the degrees both of awakening and conviction, and also of saving light, love, and joy, that many have experienced. It has also been very extraordinary in the extent of it, and its being so swiftly propagated from town to town. In former times of the pouring out of the Spirit of God on this town, though in some of them it was very remarkable, it reached no further than the neighbouring towns, all around, continued unmoved.

This work seemed to be at its greatest height in this town in the former part of the spring, in March and April. At that time, God's work in the conversion of souls was carried on amongst us in so wonderful a manner, that, so far as I can judge, it appears to have been at the rate, at least, of four persons in a day; or near thirty in a week, take one with another, for five or six weeks together. When God in so remarkable a manner took the work into his own hands, there was as much done in a day or two as at ordinary times, with all endeavours that men can use, and with such a blessing as we commonly have, is done in a year.

I am very sensibly how apt many would be, if they should see the account I have here given, presently to think with themselves that I am very fond of making a great many converts, and of magnifying the matter; and to think that, for want of judgment, I take every religious pang and enthusiastic conceit for saving conversion. I do not much wonder, if they should be apt to think so; and, for this reason, I have forborne to publish an account of this great work of God.

though I have often been solicited. But having now a special call to give an account of it, upon mature consideration I thought it might not be beside my duty to declare this amazing work, as it appeared to me to be indeed divine, and to conceal no part of the glory of it; leaving it with God to take care of the credit of his own work, and running the venture of any censorious thoughts which might be entertained of me to my disadvantage. That distant persons may be under as great advantage as may be, to judge for themselves of this matter, I would be a little more large and particular.

SECT. II.

The manner of conversion various, yet bearing a great analogy.

I therefore proceed to give an account of the manner of persons being wrought upon; and here there is a vast variety, perhaps as manifold as the subjects of the operation; but yet in many things there is a great analogy in all.—Persons are first awakened with a sense of their miserable condition by nature, the danger they are in of perishing eternally, and that it is of great importance to them that they speedily escape and get into a better state. Those who before were secure and senseless, are made sensible how much they were in the way to ruin, in their former courses. Some are more suddenly seized with convictions—it may be, by the news of others' conversion, or something they hear in public, or in private conference—their consciences are smitten, as if their hearts were pierced through with a dart. Others are awakened more gradually, they begin at first to be something more thoughtful and considerate, so as to come to a conclusion in their minds, that it is their best and wisest way to delay no longer, but to improve the present opportunity. They have accordingly set themselves seriously to meditate on those things that have the most awakening tendency, on purpose to obtain convictions; and so their awakenings have increased, till a sense of their misery, by God's Holy Spirit setting in therewith, has had fast hold of them. Others who before had been somewhat religious, and concerned for their salvation, have been awakened in a new manner; and made sensible that their slack and dull way of seeking was never like to attain their purpose.

These awakenings when they have first seized on persons, have had two effects: one was, that they have brought them immediately to quit their sinful practices; and the looser sort have been brought to forsake and dread their former vices and extravagances. When once the spirit of God began to be

so wonderfully poured out in a general way through the town, people had soon done with their old quarrels, backbitings, and intermeddling with other men's matters. The tavern was soon left empty, and persons kept very much at home; none went abroad unless on necessary business, or on some religious account, and every day seemed in many respects like a Sabbath day. The other effect was, that it put them on earnest application to the means of salvation, reading, prayer, meditation, the ordinances of God's house, and private conference; their cry was, What shall we do to be saved? The place of resort was now altered, it was no longer the tavern, but the minister's house; that was thronged far more than ever the tavern had been wont to be.

There is a very great variety, as to the degree of fear and trouble that persons are exercised with, before they attain any comfortable evidences of pardon and acceptance with God. Some are from the beginning carried on with abundantly more encouragement and hope than others. Some have had ten times less trouble of mind than others, in whom yet the issue seems to be the same. Some have had such a sense of the displeasure of God, and the great danger they were in of damnation, that they could not sleep at nights; and many have said that when they had laid down, the thoughts of sleeping in such a condition have been frightful to them; they have scarcely been free from terror while asleep, and they have awakened with fear, heaviness, and distress, still abiding on their spirits. It has been very common, that the deep and fixed concern on person's minds has had a painful influence on their bodies, and given disturbance to animal nature.

The awful apprehensions persons have had of their misery, have for the most part been increasing, the nearer they have approached to deliverance; though they often pass through many changes and alterations in the frame and circumstances of their minds. Sometimes they think themselves wholly senseless, and fear that the spirit of God has left them, and that they are given up to judicial hardness; yet they appear very deeply exercised about that fear, and are in great earnest to obtain convictions again.

Together with those fears, and that exercise of mind which is rational, and which they have just ground for, they have often suffered many needless distresses of thought, in which Satan probably has a great hand, to entangle them, and block up their way. Sometimes the distemper of melancholy has been evidently mixed; of which, when it happens, the tempter seems to take great advantage, and puts an unhappy bar in the way of any good effect. One knows not how to deal with such persons; they turn every thing that is said to them the wrong way, and most to their own disadvantage. There is nothing that the devil seems to make so great a handle of, as

a melancholy humour; unless it be the real corruption of the heart.

But it is very remarkable that there has been far less of this mixture at this time of extraordinary blessing, than there was wont to be in persons under awakenings at other times; for it is evident that many who before had been exceedingly involved in such difficulties, seemed now strangely to be set at liberty. Some persons who had before, for a long time, been exceedingly entangled with peculiar temptations of one sort or other, unprofitable and hurtful distresses, were soon helped over former stumbling blocks, that hindered their progress towards saving good; convictions have wrought more kindly, and they have been successfully carried on in the way to life. And thus Satan seemed to be restrained, till towards the latter end of this wonderful time, when God's Holy Spirit was about to withdraw.

Many times persons under great awakenings were concerned, because they thought they were not awakened, but miserable, hard-hearted, senseless, sottish creatures still, and sleeping upon the brink of hell. The sense of the need they have to be awakened, and of their comparative hardness, grows upon them with their awakenings; so that they seem to themselves to be very senseless, when indeed most sensible. There have been some instances of persons who have had as great a sense of their danger and misery, as their natures could well subsist under, so that a little more would probably have destroyed them; and yet they have expressed themselves much amazed at their own insensibility and sottishness, at such an extraordinary time.

Persons are sometimes brought to the borders of despair, and it looks as black as midnight to them a little before the day dawns in their souls. Some few instances there have been of persons who have had such a sense of God's wrath for sin, that they have been overborne; and made to cry out under an astonishing sense of their guilt, wondering that God suffers such guilty wretches to live upon earth, and that he doth not immediately send them to hell. Sometimes their guilt doth so stare them in the face, that they are in exceeding terror for fear that God will instantly do it; but more commonly their distresses under legal awakenings have not been to such a degree. In some these terrors do not seem to be so sharp, when near comfort, as before; their convictions have not seemed to work so much that way, but to be led further down into their hearts, to a further sense of their own universal depravity and deadness in sin.

The corruption of the heart has discovered itself in various exercises, in the time of legal convictions; sometimes it appears in a great struggle, like something roused by an enemy,

and Satan the old inhabitant, seems to exert himself, like a serpent disturbed and enraged. Many in such circumstances have felt a great spirit of envy towards the godly, especially towards those who are thought to have been lately converted, and most of all towards acquaintance and companions, when they are thought to be converted. Indeed, some have felt many heart-risings against God, and murmurings at his way of dealing with mankind, and his dealings with themselves in particular. It has been much insisted on, both in public and private, that persons should have the utmost dread of such envious thoughts; which if allowed tend exceedingly to quench the spirit of God, if not to provoke him finally to forsake them. And when such a spirit has much prevailed, and persons have not so earnestly strove against it as they ought to have done, it has seemed to be exeedingly to the hindrance of the good of their souls. But in some other instances, where persons have been much terrified at the sight of such wickedness in their hearts, God has brought good to them out of evil; and made it a means of convincing them of their own desperate sinfulness, and bringing them off from all self-confidence.

The drift of the Spirit of God in his legal strivings with persons, have seemed most evidently to be, to bring to a conviction of their absolute dependence on his sovereign power and grace, and an universal necessity of a mediator. This has been effected by leading them more and more to a sense of their exceeding wickedness and guiltiness in his sight; their pollution, and the insufficiency of their own righteousness; that they can in no wise help themselves, and that God would be wholly just and righteous in rejecting them and all that they do, and in casting them off for ever. There is however a vast variety as to the manner and distinctness of such convictions.

As they are gradually more and more convinced of the corruption and wickedness of their hearts; they seem to themselves to grow worse and worse, harder and blinder, and more desperately wicked, instead of growing better. They are ready to be discouraged by it, and oftentimes never think themselves so far off from good, as when they are nearest. Under the sense which the Spirit of God gives them of their sinfulness, they often think that they differ from all others; their hearts are ready to sink with the thought, that they are the worst of all, and that none ever obtained mercy who were so wicked as they.

When awakenings first begin, their consciences are commonly most exercised about their outward vicious course, or other acts of sin; but afterwards, are much more burdened with a sense of heart-sins, the dreadful corruption of their nature, their enmity against God, the pride of their hearts, their unbelief,

their rejection of Christ, the stubbornness and obstinacy of their wills; and the like. In many God makes much use of their own experience in the course of their awakenings and endeavours after saving good, to convince them of their own vile emptiness and universal depravity.

Very often under first awakenings, when they are brought to reflect on the sin of their past lives, and have something of a terrifying sense of God's anger, they set themselves to walk more strictly, and confess their sins, and perform many religious duties, with a secret hope of appeasing God's anger and making up for the sins they have committed. And oftentimes, at first setting out, their affections are so moved, that they are full of tears, in their confessions and prayers; which they are ready to make very much of, as though they were some atonement, and had power to move correspondent affections in God too. Hence they are for awhile big with expectation of what God will do for them; and conceive they grow better apace, and shall soon be thoroughly converted. But these affections are but short lived; they quickly find that they fail, and then they think themselves to be grown worse again. They do not find such a prospect of being soon converted as they thought: instead of being nearer, they seem to be farther off; their hearts they think are grown harder, and by this means their fears of perishing greatly increase. But though they are disappointed, they renew their attempts again and again; and still as their attempts are multiplied, so are their disappointments. All fails, they see no token of having inclined God's heart to them, they do not see that he hears their prayers at all, as they expected he would; and sometimes there have been great temptations arising hence to leave off seeking, and to yield up the case. But as they are still more terrified with fears of perishing, and their former hopes of prevailing on God to be merciful to them in a great measure fail; sometimes their religious affections have turned into heart-risings against God, because he will not pity them, and seems to have little regard to their distress, and piteous cries, and to all the pains they take. They think of the mercy God has shown to others; how soon, and how easily others have obtained comfort, and those too who were worse than they, and have not laboured so much as they have done; and sometimes they have had even dreadful blasphemous thoughts in these circumstances.

But when they reflect on these wicked workings of heart against God—if their convictions are continued, and the spirit of God is not provoked utterly to forsake them—they have more distressing apprehensions of the anger of God towards those whose hearts work after such a sinful manner about him; and it may be, have great fears that they have committed the unpardonable sin, or that God will surely never show mercy to

them who are such vipers; and are often tempted to leave off in despair. But then perhaps by something they read or hear of the infinite mercy of God, and all-sufficiency of Christ for the chief of sinners, they have some encouragement and hope renewed; but think that as yet, they are not fit to come to Christ; they are so wicked that Christ will never accept of them. And then it may be they set themselves upon a new course of fruitless endeavours, in their own strength, to make themselves better; and still meet with new disappointments. They are earnest to enquire, what they shall do? They do not know but there is something else to be done, in order to their obtaining converting grace, that they have never done yet. It may be they hope, that they are something better than they were; but then the pleasing dream all vanishes again. If they are told, that they trust too much to their own strength and righteousness, they cannot unlearn this practice all at once, and find not yet the appearance of any good, but all looks as dark as midnight to them. Thus they wander about from mountain to hill, seeking rest and finding none. When they are beat out of *one* refuge, they fly to *another;* till they are as it were debilitated, broken, and subdued with legal humblings; in which God gives them a conviction of their own utter helplessness and insufficiency, and discovers the true remedy in a clearer knowledge of Christ and his gospel.

When they begin to seek salvation, they are commonly profoundly ignorant of themselves; they are not sensible how blind they are, and how little they can do towards bringing themselves to see spiritual things aright, and towards putting forth gracious exercises in their own souls. They are not sensible how remote they are from love to God, and other holy dispositions, and how dead they are in sin. When they see unexpected pollution in their own hearts, they go about to wash away their own defilements, and make themselves clean; and they weary themselves in vain, till God shows them that it is in vain, and that their help is not where they have sought it.

But some persons continue wandering in such a kind of labyrinth, ten times as long as others, before their own experience will convince them of their insufficiency; and so it appears not to be their own experience only, but the convincing influence of God's Holy Spirit with their experience, that attains the effect. God has of late abundantly shown, that he does not need to wait to have men convinced by long and often repeated fruitless trials; for in multitudes of instances he has made a shorter work of it. He has so awakened and convinced persons' consciences, and made them so sensible of their exceeding great vileness, and given them such a sense of his wrath against sin, as has quickly overcome all their vain self-

confidence, and borne them down into the dust before a holy and righteous God.

There have been some who have not had great terrors, but have had a very quick work. Some of those who have not had so deep a conviction of these things *before* their conversion, have much more of it *afterwards*. God has appeared far from limiting himself to any certain method in his proceedings with sinners under legal convictions. In some instances, it seems easy for our reasoning powers to discern the methods of divine wisdom, in his dealings with the soul under awakenings; in others, his footsteps cannot be traced, and his ways are past finding out. Some who are less distinctly wrought upon in what is preparatory to grace, appear no less eminent in gracious experiences afterwards.

There is in nothing a greater difference, in different persons, than with respect to the time of their being under trouble; some but a few days, and others for months or years. There were many in this town who had been, before this effusion of the Spirit upon us, for years, and some for many years, concerned about their salvation. Though probably they were not thoroughly awakened, yet they were concerned to such a degree as to be very uneasy, so as to live an uncomfortable disquieted life. They continued in a way of taking considerable pains about their salvation; but had never obtained any comfortable evidence of a good state. Several such persons, in this extraordinary time, have received light; but many of them were some of the *last*. They first saw multitudes of others rejoicing, with songs of deliverance in their mouths, who before had seemed wholly careless and at ease, and in pursuit of vanity; while they had been bowed down with solicitude about their souls. Yea, some had lived licentiously, and so continued till a little before they were converted; and yet soon grew up to a holy rejoicing in the infinite blessings God had bestowed upon them.

Whatever minister has a like occasion to deal with souls, in a flock under such circumstances as this was in the last year, I cannot but think he will soon find himself under a necessity greatly to insist upon it with them, that God is under no manner of obligation to shew mercy to any natural man, whose heart is not turned to God: and that a man can challenge nothing either in absolute justice or by free promise, from any thing he does before he has believed on Jesus Christ, or has true repentance begun in him. It appears to me that if I had taught those who came to me under trouble, any other doctrine, I should have taken a most direct course utterly to undo them. I should have directly crossed what was plainly the drift of the Spirit of God in his influences upon them; for if they had believed what I said, it would either have promoted

self-flattery and carelessness, and so put an end to their awakenings, or cherished and established their contention and strife with God concerning his dealings with them and others, and blocked up their way to that humiliation before the Sovereign Disposer of Life and death, whereby God is wont to prepare them for his consolations. And yet those who have been under awakenings, have oftentimes plainly stood in need of being encouraged, by being told of the infinite and all-sufficient mercy of God in Christ; and that it is God's manner to succeed diligence, and to bless his own means, that so awakenings and encouragements, fear and hope may be duly mixed, and proportioned to preserve their minds in a just medium between the two extremes of self-flattery and despondence, both which tend to slackness and negligence, and in the end to security. I think I have found that no discourses have been more remarkably blessed, than those in which the doctrine of God's absolute sovereignty with regard to the salvation of sinners, and his just liberty with regard to answering the prayers, or succeeding the pains of natural men, continuing such, have been insisted on. I never found so much immediate saving fruit, in any measure, of any discourses I have offered to my congregation, as some from these words, Rom. iii. 19, "That every mouth may be stopped;" endeavouring to shew from thence, that it would be just with God for ever to reject and cast off mere natural men.

As to those in whom awakenings seem to have a saving issue, commonly the first thing that appears after their legal troubles is a conviction of the justice of God in their condemnation, appearing in a sense of their own exceeding sinfulness, and the vileness of all their performances. In giving an account of this, they expressed themselves very variously: some, that they saw God was sovereign, and might receive others and reject them; some that they were convinced, God might justly bestow mercy on every person in the town, in the world, and damn themselves to all eternity; some, that they see God may justly have no regard to all the pains they have taken, and all the prayers they have made; some, that if they should seek, and take the utmost pains all their lives, God might justly cast them into hell at last, because all their labours, prayers, and tears cannot make an atonement for the least sin, nor merit any blessing at the hands of God; some have declared themselves to be in the hands of God, that he may dispose of them just as he pleases; some, that God may glorify himself in their damnation, and they wonder that God has suffered them to live so long, and has not cast them into hell long ago.

Some are brought to this conviction by a great sense of their sinfulness, in general, that they are such vile wicked

creatures in heart and life: others have the sins of their lives in an extraordinary manner set before them, multitudes of them coming just then fresh to their memory, and being set before them with their aggravations. Some have their minds especially fixed on some particular wicked practice they have indulged; some are especially convinced by a sight of the corruption and wickedness of their hearts. Some, from a view they have of the horridness of some particular exercises of corruption, which they have had in the time of their awakening, whereby the enmity of the heart against God has been manifested; some are convinced especially by a sense of the sin of unbelief, the opposition of their hearts to the way of salvation by Christ, and their obstinacy in rejecting him and his grace.

There is a great deal of difference as to distinctness here: some, who have not so clear a sight of God's justice in their condemnation, yet mention things that plainly imply it. They find a disposition to acknowledge God to be just and righteous in his threatenings; and that they are undeserving: and many times, though they had not so particular a sight of it at the beginning, they have very clear discoveries of it soon afterwards, with great humblings in the dust before God.

Commonly persons' minds immediately before this discovery of God's justice are exceedingly restless, in a kind of struggle and tumult, and sometimes in mere anguish; but generally, as soon as they have this conviction, it immediately brings their minds to a calm, and unexpected quietness and composure; and most frequently, though not always, then the pressing weight upon their spirits is taken away, and a general hope arises, that some time or other God will be gracious, even before any distinct and particular discoveries of mercy. Often they then come to a conclusion within themselves, that they will lie at God's feet, and wait his time; and they rest in that, not being sensible that the Spirit of God has now brought them to a frame whereby they are prepared for mercy. For it is remarkable, that persons when they first have this sense of the justice of God, rarely, at the time, think any thing of its being that humiliation they have often heard insisted on, and that others experience.

In many persons, the first conviction of the justice of God in their condemnation, which they take particular notice of, and probably the first distinct conviction of it that they have, is of such a nature, as seems to be above any thing merely legal. Though it be after legal humblings, and much of a sense of their own helplessness, and of the insufficiency of their own duties; yet it does not appear to be forced by mere legal terrors and convictions; but rather from a high exercise of grace, in saving repentance, and evangelical humiliation.

For there is in it a sort of complacency of soul, in the attribute of God's justice, as displayed in his threatenings of eternal damnation to sinners. Sometimes at the discovery of it, they can scarcely forbear crying out, IT IS JUST! IT IS JUST! Some express themselves, that they see the glory of God would shine bright in their own condemnation; and they are ready to think that if they are damned, they could take part with God against themselves, and would glorify his justice therein. And when it is thus, they commonly have some evident sense of free and all-sufficient grace, though they give no distinct account of it; but it is manifest, by that great degree of hope and encouragement they then conceive, though they were never so sensible of their own vileness and ill-deservings as they are at that time.

Some, when in such circumstances, have felt that sense of the excellency of God's justice, appearing in the vindictive exercises of it, against such sinfulness as theirs was; and have had such a submission of mind in their idea of this attribute, and of those exercises of it—together with an exceeding loathing of their own unworthiness, and a kind of indignation against themselves—that they have sometimes almost called it a willingness to be damned; though it must be owned they had not clear and distinct ideas of damnation, nor does any word in the bible require such self-denial as this. But the truth is, as some have more clearly expressed it, that salvation has appeared too good for them, that they were worthy of nothing but condemnation, and they could not tell how to think of salvation being bestowed upon them, fearing it was inconsistent with the glory of God's majesty, that they had so much contemned and affronted.

That calm of spirit that some persons have found after their legal distresses, continues some time before any special and delightful manifestation is made to the soul of the grace of God as revealed in the gospel. But very often some comfortable and sweet view of a merciful God, of a sufficient Redeemer, or of some great and joyful things of the gospel, immediately follows, or in a very little time: and in some, the first sight of their just desert of hell, and God's sovereignty with respect to their salvation, and a discovery of all-sufficient grace, are so near, that they seem to go as it were together.

These gracious discoveries given, whence the first special comforts are derived, are in many respects very various. More frequently, Christ is distinctly made the object of the mind, in his all-sufficiency and willingness to save sinners; but some have their thoughts more especially fixed on God, in some of his sweet and glorious attributes manifested in the gospel, and shining forth in the face of Christ. Some view the all-

sufficiency of the mercy and grace of God; some, chiefly the infinite power of God, and his ability to save them, and to do all things for them; and some look most at the truth and faithfulness of God. In some, the truth and certainty of the gospel in general is the first joyful discovery they have; in others, the certain truth of some particular promises; in some, the grace and sincerity of God in his invitations, very commonly in some particular invitation in the mind, and it now appears real to them that God does indeed invite them. Some are struck with the glory and wonderfulness of the dying love of Christ; and some with the sufficiency and preciousness of his blood, as offered to make an atonement for sin; and others with the value and glory of his obedience and righteousness. In some the excellency and loveliness of Christ, chiefly engages their thoughts; in some his divinity, that he is indeed the Son of the living God; and in others, the excellency of the way of salvation by Christ, and the suitableness of it to their necessities.

Some have an apprehension of these things so given, that it seems more natural to them to express it by sight or discovery; others think what they experience better expressed by the realizing conviction, or a lively or feeling sense of heart; meaning, as I suppose, no other difference but what is merely circumstantial or gradual.

There is, often, in the mind, some particular text or scripture, holding forth some evangelical ground of consolation; sometimes a multitude of texts, gracious invitations and promises flowing in one after another, filling the soul more and more with comfort and satisfaction. Comfort is first given to some, while reading some portion of scripture; but in some it is attended with no particular scripture at all, either in reading or meditation. In some, many divine things seem to be discovered to the soul as it were at once; others have their minds especially fixing on some one thing at first, and afterwards a sense is given of others; in some with a swifter, and others a slower succession, and sometimes with interruptions of much darkness.

The way that grace seems sometimes first to appear, after legal humiliation, is in earnest longings of soul after God and Christ; to know God, to love him, to be humble before him, to have communion with Christ in his benefits; which longings, as they express them, seem evidently to be of such a nature as can arise from nothing but a sense of the superlative excellency of divine things, with a spiritual taste and relish of them, and an esteem of them as their highest happiness and best portion. Such longings as I speak of, are commonly attended with firm resolutions to pursue this good for ever, together with a hoping, waiting disposition. When persons have

begun in such frames, commonly other experiences and discoveries have soon followed, which have yet more clearly manifested a change of heart.

It must needs be confessed that Christ is not always distinctly and explicitly thought of in the first sensible act of grace, (though most commonly he is) but sometimes he is the object of the mind only implicitly. Thus sometimes when persons have seemed evidently to be stripped of all their own righteousness, and to have stood condemned as guilty of death, they have been comforted with a joyful and satisfying view, that the mercy and grace of God is sufficient for them—that their sins, though never so great, shall be no hindrance to their being accepted; that there is mercy enough in God for the whole world, and the like—when they give no account of any particular or distinct thought of Christ. But yet, when the account they give is duly weighed, and they are a little interrogated about it, it appears that the revelation of mercy in the gospel, is the ground of their encouragement and hope; and that it is indeed the mercy of God through Christ that is discovered to them, and that it is depended on in him, and not in any wise moved by any thing in them.

Sometimes disconsolate souls have been revived, and brought to rest in God, by a sweet sense of his grace and faithfulness, in some special invitation or promise; in which nevertheless there is no particular mention of Christ, nor is it accompanied with any distinct thought of him in their minds; but yet it is not received as out of Christ, but as one of the invitations or promises made of God to poor sinners through his son Jesus. And such persons afterwards have had clear and distinct discoveries of Christ, accompanied with lively and special actings of faith and love towards him.

Frequently, when persons have first had the gospel-ground of relief discovered to them, and have been entertaining their minds with the sweet prospect, they have thought nothing at that time of their being converted. To see, that there is an all-sufficiency in God, and such plentiful provision made in Christ after they have been borne down, and sunk with a sense of their guilt and fears of wrath, exceedingly refreshes them. The view is joyful to them; as it is in its own nature glorious, gives them quite new and delightful ideas of God and Christ, greatly encourages them to seek conversion. This begets in them a strong resolution to devote themselves and their whole lives to God and his Son, and patiently to wait till God shall see fit to make all effectual; and very often entertain a strong persuasion that he will in his own time do it for them.

There is wrought in them a holy repose of soul in God through Christ, with a secret disposition to fear and love him.

and to hope for blessings from him in this way. Yet they have no imagination that they are now converted, it does not so much as come into their minds: and often the very reason is, that they do not see that they accept of this sufficiency of salvation they behold in Christ, having entertained a wrong notion of acceptance; not being sensible that the obedient and joyful entertainment which their hearts give to this discovery of grace is a real acceptance of it. They know not that the sweet complacence they feel in the mercy and complete salvation of God, as it includes pardon and sanctification, and is held forth to them only through Christ, is a true receiving of this mercy, or a plain evidence of their receiving it. They expected I know not what kind of act of soul, and perhaps they had no distinct idea of it themselves.

And indeed it appears very plainly in some of them, that before their own conversion they had very imperfect ideas what conversion was. It is all new and strange, and what there was no clear conception of before. It is most evident, as they themselves acknowledge, that the expressions used to describe conversion, and the graces of God's Holy Spirit—such as "a spiritual sight of Christ, faith in Christ, poverty of spirit, trust in God," &c.—did not convey those distinct ideas to their minds which they were intended to signify. Perhaps to some of them it was but little more than the names of colours are to convey the ideas to one that is blind from his birth.

In this town there always has been a great deal of talk about conversion and spiritual experiences; and therefore people in general had formed a notion in their own minds what these things were. But when they become to be the subjects of them, they find themselves much confounded in their notions, and overthrown in many of their former conceits. And it has been very observable, that persons of the greatest understanding, and who had studied most about things of this nature, have been more confounded than others. Some such persons declare, that all their former wisdom is brought to nought, and that they appear to have been mere babes, who knew nothing. It has appeared that none have stood more in need of instruction, even of their fellow-christians, concerning their own circumstances and difficulties than they: and it seems to have been with delight, that they have seen themselves thus brought down, and become nothing, that free grace and divine power may be exalted in them.

It was very wonderful to see how personal affections were sometimes moved—when God did as it were suddenly open their eyes, and let into their minds a sense of the greatness of his grace, the fulness of Christ, and his readiness to save—after having been broken with apprehensions of divine wrath, and sunk into an abyss, under a sense of guilt which they

were ready to think was beyond the mercy of God. Their joyful surprise has caused their hearts as it were to leap, so that they have been ready to break forth into laughter, tears often at the same time issuing like a flood, and intermingling a loud weeping. Sometimes they have not been able to forbear crying out with a loud voice, expressing their great admiration. In some, even the view of the glory of God's sovereignty, in the exercises of his grace, has surprised the soul with such sweetness, as to produce the same effects. I remember an instance of one, who, reading something concerning God's sovereign way of saving sinners, as being self-moved—having no regard to men's own righteousness as the motive of his grace, but as magnifying himself and abasing man, or to that purpose—felt such a sudden rapture of joy and delight in the consideration of it; and yet then he suspected himself to be in a christless condition, and had been long in great distress for fear that God would not have mercy on him.

Many continue a long time in a course of gracious exercises and experiences, and do not think themselves to be converted, but conclude otherwise; and none knows how long they would continue so, were they not helped by particular instructions. There are undoubted instances of some who have lived in this way for many years together; and these circumstances had various consequences, with various persons, and with the same persons, at various times. Some continue in great encouragement and hope, that they shall obtain mercy in a steadfast resolution to persevere in seeking it, and in an humble waiting for it before God. But very often, when the lively sense of the sufficiency of Christ and the riches of divine grace, begins to vanish, upon a withdrawment of divine influences, they return to greater distress than ever. For they have now a far greater sense of the misery of a natural condition than before, being in a new manner sensible of the reality of eternal things, the greatness of God, his excellency, and how dreadful it is to be separated from him, and to be subject to his wrath; so that they are sometimes swallowed up with darkness and amazement. Satan has a vast advantage in such cases to ply them with various temptations, which he is not wont to neglect, in such a case, persons very much need a guide to lead them to an understanding of what we are taught in the word of God concerning the nature of grace, and to help them to apply it to themselves.

I have been much blamed and censured by many, that I should make it my practice, when I have been satisfied concerning persons' good estate, to signify it to them. This has been greatly misrepresented abroad, as innumerable other things concerning us, to prejudice the country against the

whole affair. But let it be noted, that what I have undertaken to judge of, has rather been qualifications, and declared experiences, than persons. Not but that I have thought it my duty, as a pastor, to assist and instruct persons in applying scripture rules and characters to their own case, (in which, I think, many greatly need a guide;) and I have, where the case appeared plain, used freedom in signifying my hope of them to others. But I have been far from doing this concerning all that I have had some hopes of; and I believe have used much more caution than many have supposed. Yet I should account it a great calamity to be deprived of the comfort of rejoicing with those of my flock, who have been in great distress, whose circumstances I have been acquainted with, when there seems to be good evidence that those who were dead are alive, and that those who were lost are found. I am sensible the practice would have been safer in the hands of one of a riper judgment and greater experience: but yet, there seemed to be an absolute necessity of it on the fore-mentioned accounts; and it has been found what God has most remarkably owned and blessed amongst us, both to the persons themselves, and to others.

Grace in many persons, through this ignorance of their state, and their looking on themselves still as the objects of God's displeasure, has been like the trees in winter, or like seed in the spring suppressed under a hard clod of earth. Many in such cases have laboured to their utmost to divert their minds from the pleasing and joyful views they have had, and to suppress those consolations and gracious affections that arose thereupon. And when it has once come into their minds to enquire whether or no this was not true grace, they have been much afraid lest they should be deceived with common illuminations and flashes of affection, and eternally undone with a false hope. But when they have been better instructed, and so brought to allow of hope, this has awakened the gracious disposition of their hearts into life and vigour, as the warm beams of the sun in the spring, have quickened the seeds and productions of the earth. Grace being now at liberty, and cherished with hope, has soon flowed out to their abundant satisfaction and increase.

There is no one thing that I know of which God has made such a means of promoting his work amongst us, as the news of others' conversion. This has been owned in awakening sinners, engaging them earnestly to seek the same blessing, and in quickening saints. Though I have thought that a minister declaring his judgment about particular persons' experiences, might from these things be justified; yet I often signify to my people, how unable man is to know another's heart, and how unsafe it is to depend merely on the judgment of others.

I have abundantly insisted, that a manifestation of sincerity in fruits brought forth, is better than any manifestation they can make of it in words alone: and that without this, all pretences to spiritual experiences are vain. This all my congregation can witness. And the people in general, have manifested an extraordinary dread of being deceived; being exceeding fearful lest they should build wrong. Some of them have been backward to receive hope, even to a great extreme, which has occasioned me to dwell longer on this part of the narrative.

Conversion is a great and glorious work of God's power, at once changing the heart, and infusing life into the dead soul; though the grace then implanted more gradually displays itself in some than in others. But as to fixing on the precise time when they put forth the very first act of grace, there is a great deal of difference in different persons; in some it seems to be very discernible when the very time was; but others are more at a loss. In this respect, there are very many who do not know, even when they have it, that it is the grace of conversion, and sometimes do not think it to be so till a long time after. Many, even when they come to entertain great hopes that they are converted, if they remember what they experienced in the first exercises of grace, they are at a loss whether it was any more than a common illumination; or whether some other more clear and remarkable experience which they had afterwards, was not the first of a saving nature. The manner of God's work on the soul, sometimes especially is very mysterious; and it is with the kingdom of God as to its manifestation in the heart of a convert, as is said, Mark iv. 26, 27, 28. "So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground, and should sleep, and rise, night and day, and the seed should spring, and grow up, he knoweth not how; for the earth bringeth forth of herself, first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear."

In some, converting light is like a glorious brightness suddenly shining upon a person and all around him: they are in a remarkable manner brought out of darkness into marvellous light. In many others it has been like the dawning of the day, when at first but a little light appears, and it may be is presently hid with a cloud; and then it appears again, and shines a little brighter, and gradually increases, with intervening darkness, till at length it breaks forth more clearly from behind the clouds. And many are, doubtless, ready to date their conversion wrong, throwing by those lesser degrees of light that appeared at first dawning, and calling some more remarkable experience they had afterwards, their conversion. This often, in a great measure, arises from a wrong understanding of what they have always been taught, that conversion is a great

change, wherein old things are done away, and all things become new, or at least from a false inference from that doctrine.

Persons commonly at first conversion, and afterwards, have had many texts of scripture brought to their minds, which are exceeding suitable to their circumstances, often come with great power, as the word of God or of Christ indeed; and many have a multitude of sweet invitations, promises, and doxologies flowing in one after another, bringing great light and comfort with them, filling the soul brimfull, enlarging the heart, and opening the mouth in religion. And it seems to me necessary to suppose, that there is an immediate influence of the Spirit of God, oftentimes, in bringing texts of scripture to the mind. Not that I suppose it is done in a way of immediate revelation, without any use of the memory; but yet there seems plainly to be an immediate and extraordinary influence, in leading their thoughts to such and such passages of scripture and exciting them in the memory. Indeed in some, God seems to bring texts of scripture to their minds no otherwise than by leading them into such frames and meditations, as harmonize with those scriptures; but in many persons there seems to be something more than this.

Those who, while under legal convictions, have had the greatest terrors, have not always obtained the greatest light and comfort; nor have they always light most suddenly communicated; but yet, I think, the time of conversion has generally been most sensible in such persons. Oftentimes, the first sensible change after the extremity of terrors, in a calmness, and then the light gradually comes in; small glimpses at first, after their midnight darkness, and a word or two of comfort, as it were softly spoken to them. They have a little taste of the sweetness of divine grace, and the love of a Saviour; when terror and distress of conscience begin to be turned into an humble, meek sense of their own unworthiness before God. There is felt, inwardly, sometimes a disposition to praise God; and after a little while the light comes in more clearly and powerfully. But, yet, I think, more frequently, great terrors have been followed with more sudden and great light, and comfort: when the sinner seems to be as it were subdued and brought to a calm, from a kind of tumult of mind, then God lets in an extraordinary sense of his great mercy through a Redeemer.

Converting influences very commonly bring an extraordinary conviction of the reality and certainty of the great things of religion; though in some this is much greater some time after conversion, than at first. They have that sight and taste of the divine excellency there is in the gospel, which is more effectual to convince them, than reading many volumes of arguments without it. It seems to me, that in many in-

stances, when the glory of Christian truths has been set before persons, and they have at the same time as it were seen, and tasted, and felt the divinity of them, they have been as far from doubting their truth, as they are from doubting whether there be a sun, when their eyes are open in the midst of a clear hemisphere, and the strong blaze of his light overcomes all objections. And yet, many of them, if we should ask them why they believed those things to be true, would not be able well to express, or communicate a sufficient reason to satisfy the enquirer; and perhaps would make no other answer but that they see them to be true. But a person might soon be satisfied, by a particular conversation with them, that what they mean by such an answer is, that they have intuitively beheld, and immediately felt, most illustrious and powerful evidence of divinity in them.

Some are thus convinced of the truth of the gospel in general, and that the scriptures are the word of God: others have their minds more especially fixed on some particular great doctrine of the gospel, some particular truths that they are meditating on, or reading of, in some portion of scripture. Some have such convictions in a much more remarkable manner than others; and there are some who never had such a special sense of the certainty of divine things pressed upon them, with such inward evidence and strength, have yet very clear exercises of grace; i. e. of love to God, repentance and holiness. And if they be more particularly examined, they appear plainly to have an inward firm persuasion of the reality of divine things, such as they did not use to have before their conversion. And those who have the most clear discoveries of divine truth, in the manner that has been mentioned, cannot have this always in view. When the sense and relish of the divine excellency of these things fades, on a withdrawment of the spirit of God, they have not the medium of the conviction of their truth at command. In a dull frame, they cannot recall the idea and inward sense they had, perfectly to mind; things appear very dim to what they did before. And though there still remains an habitual strong persuasion; yet not so as to exclude temptations to unbelief, and all possibility of doubting. But then, at particular times, by God's help, the same sense of things revives again, like fire that lay hid in ashes.

I suppose the grounds of such a conviction of the truth of divine things to be just and rational; but yet, in some God makes use of their own reason much more sensibly than in others. Oftentimes persons have (so far as could be judged) received the first saving conviction from reasoning which they have heard from the pulpit; and often in the course of reasoning they are led into in their own meditations.

The arguments are the same that they have heard hundreds of times; but the force of the arguments, and their conviction by them, is altogether new; they come with a new and before unexperienced power. Before, they heard it was so, and they allowed it to be so; but now they see it to be so indeed. Things now look exceeding plain to them, and they wonder they did not see them before.

They are so greatly taken with their new discovery, and things appear so plain and so rational to them, that they are often at first ready to think they can convince others; and are apt to engage in talk with every one they meet with, almost to this end; and when they are disappointed, are ready to wonder that their reasonings seem to make no more impression.

Many fall under such a mistake as to be ready to doubt of their good estate, because there was so much use made of their own reason in the convictions they have received; they are afraid that they have no illumination above the natural force of their own faculties; and many make that an objection against the spirituality of their convictions, that it is so easy to see things as they now see them. They have often heard, that conversion is a work of mighty power, manifesting to the soul what neither man nor angel can give such a conviction of; but it seems to them that these things are so plain and easy and rational, that any body can see them. If they are asked why they never saw thus before; they say, it seems to them it was because they never thought of it. But very often these difficulties are soon removed by those of another nature; for when God withdraws, they find themselves as it were blind again, they for the present lose their realizing sense of those things that looked so plain to them, and, by all they can do they cannot recover it, till God renews the influences of his Spirit.

Persons after their conversion often speak of religious things as seeming new to them; that preaching is a new thing; that it seems to them they never heard preaching before; that the Bible is a new book; they find there new chapters, new psalms, new histories, because they see them in a new light. Here was a remarkable instance of an aged woman, of above seventy years, who had spent most of her days under Mr. Stoddard's powerful ministry. Reading in the New Testament concerning Christ's sufferings for sinners, she seemed to be astonished at what she read, as at what was real and very wonderful, but quite new to her. At first, before she had time to turn her thoughts she wondered within herself, that she had never heard of it before; but then immediately recollected herself, and thought she had often heard of it, and read it, but never till now saw it as real. She then cast in her mind how wonderful this was, that the son of God should undergo such things for sinners, and how she had spent her time in ungratefully sinning

against so good a God, and such a Saviour; though she was a person, apparently, of a very blameless and inoffensive life. And she was so overcome by those considerations, that her nature was ready to fail under them; those who were about her and knew what was the matter, were surprised and thought she was a dying.

Many have spoken much of their hearts being drawn out in love to God and Christ; and of their minds being wrapt up in delightful contemplation of the glory and wonderful grace of God, the excellency and dying love of Jesus Christ; and of their souls going forth in longing desires after God and Christ. Several of our young children have expressed much of this; and have manifested a willingness to leave father and mother and all things in the world, to go and be with Christ. Some persons have had such longing desires after Christ, or which have risen to such degree, as to take away their natural strength. Some have been so overcome with a sense of the dying love of Christ to such poor, wretched, and unworthy creatures, as to weaken the body. Several persons have had so great a sense of the glory of God and excellency of Christ, that nature and life seemed almost to sink under it; and in all probability, if God had showed them a little more of himself, it would have dissolved their frame. I have seen some, and conversed with them in such frames, who have certainly been perfectly sober, and very remote from any thing like enthusiastic wildness. And they have talked, when able to speak, of the glory of God's perfections, the wonderfulness of his grace in Christ, and their own unworthiness, in such a manner as cannot be perfectly expressed after them. Their sense of their exceeding littleness and vileness, and their disposition to abase themselves before God, has appeared to be great in proportion to their light and joy.

Such persons amongst us as have been thus distinguished with the most extraordinary discoveries, have commonly no wise appeared with the assuming, self-conceited, and self-sufficient airs of enthusiasts; but exceedingly the contrary. They are eminent for a spirit of meekness, modesty, self-diffidence, and a low opinion of themselves. No persons appear so sensible of their need of instruction, and so eager to receive it, as some of them; nor so ready to think others better than themselves. Those that have been considered as converted amongst us, have generally manifested a longing to lie low, and in the dust before God; withal complaining of their not being able to lie low enough.

They speak much of their sense of excellency in the way of salvation by free and sovereign grace, through the righteousness of Christ alone; and how it is with delight that they renounce their own righteousness, and rejoice in having no

account made of it. Many have expressed themselves to this purpose, that it would lessen the satisfaction they hope for in heaven to have it by their own righteousness, or in any other way than as bestowed by free grace, and for Christ's sake alone. They speak much of the inexpressibleness of what they experience, how their words fail, so that they cannot declare it. And particularly they speak with exceeding admiration of the superlative excellency of that pleasure and delight which they sometimes enjoy; how a little of it is sufficient to pay them for all the pains and trouble they have gone through in seeking salvation; and how far it exceeds all earthly pleasures. Some express much of the sense which these spiritual views give them of the vanity of earthly enjoyments, how mean and worthless all these things appear to them.

Many, while their minds have been filled with spiritual delights, have as it were forgot their food; their bodily appetite has failed, while their minds have been entertained with meat to eat that others knew not of. The light and comfort which some of them enjoy, give a new relish to their common blessings, and cause all things about them to appear as it were beautiful, sweet, and pleasant. All things abroad, the sun, moon and stars; the clouds and sky, the heavens and earth, appear as it were with a cast of divine glory and sweetness upon them. Though this joy include in it a delightful sense of the safety of their own state, yet frequently, in times of their highest spiritual entertainment, this seems not to be the chief object of their fixed thought and meditation. The supreme attention of their minds is to the glorious excellencies of God and Christ; and there is very often a ravishing sense of God's love accompanying a sense of his excellency. They rejoice in a sense of the faithfulness of God's promises, as they respect the future, eternal enjoyment of him.

The unparalleled joy that many of them speak of, is what they find when they are lowest in the dust, emptied most of themselves, and as it were annihilating themselves before God; when they are nothing, and God is all; seeing their own unworthiness, depending not at all on themselves, but alone on Christ, and ascribing all glory to God. Then their souls are most in the enjoyment of satisfying rest; excepting that, at such times, they apprehend themselves to be not sufficiently self abased; for then above all times do they long to be lower. Some speak much of the exquisite sweetness, and rest of soul, that is to be found in the exercises of resignation to God, and humble submission to his will. Many express earnest longings of soul to praise God; but at the same time complain that they cannot praise him as they would, and they want to have others help them in praising him. They want to have every one praise

God, and are ready to call upon every thing to praise him. They express a longing desire to live to God's glory, and to do something to his honour; but at the same time complain of their insufficiency and barrenness; that they are poor impotent creatures, can do nothing of themselves, and are utterly insufficient to glorify their Creator and Redeemer.

While God was so remarkably present amongst us by his Spirit, there was no book so delightful as the Bible; especially the Book of Psalms, the Prophecy of Isaiah, and the New Testament. Some, by reason of their love to God's word, at times, have been wonderfully delighted and affected at the sight of a Bible; and then, also, there was no time so prized as the Lord's-day, and no place in this world so desired as God's house. Our converts then remarkably appeared united in dear affection to one another, and many have expressed much of that spirit of love which they felt towards all mankind; and particularly to those who had been least friendly to them. Never, I believe, was so much done in confessing injuries, and making up differences, as the last year. Persons, after their own conversion, have commonly expressed an exceeding great desire for the conversion of others. Some have thought that they should be willing to die for the conversion of any soul, though of one of the meanest of their fellow-creatures, or of their worst enemies; and many have, indeed, been in great distress with desires and longings for it. This work of God had also a good effect to unite the people's affections much to their minister.

There are some persons whom I have been acquainted with, but more especially two, that belong to other towns, who have been swallowed up exceedingly with a sense of the awful greatness and majesty of God; and both of them told me to this purpose, that if at the time, they had entertained the least fear, that they were not at peace with this so great a God, they should certainly have died.

It is worthy to be remarked, that some persons, by their conversion, seem to be greatly helped as to their doctrinal notions of religion. It was particularly remarkable in one, who, having been taken captive in his childhood, was trained up in Canada, in the Popish religion. Some years since he returned to this his native place, and was in a measure brought off from Popery; but seemed very awkward and dull in receiving any clear notion of the Protestant scheme, till he was converted; and then he was remarkably altered in this respect.

There is a vast difference, as observed, in the degree, and also in the particular manner of persons' experiences, both at and after conversion; some have grace working more sensibly in one way, others in another. Some speak more fully of a conviction of the justice of God in their condemnation; others,

more of their consenting to the way of salvation by Christ, and some, more of the actings of love to God and Christ. Some more of acts of affiance, in a sweet and assured conviction of the truth and faithfulness of God in his promises; others, more of their choosing and resting in God, as their whole and everlasting portion; and of their ardent and longing desire after God, to have communion with him; and others, more of their abhorrence to themselves for their past sins, and earnest longings to live to God's glory for the time to come. But it seems evidently to be the same work, the same habitual change wrought in the heart; it all tends the same way, and to the same end; and it is plainly the same spirit that breathes and acts in various persons. There is an endless variety in the particular manner and circumstances in which persons are wrought on; and an opportunity of seeing so much will shew, that God is further from confining himself to a particular method in his work on souls, than some imagine. I believe it has occasioned some good people amongst us, who were before too ready to make their own experience a rule to others, to be less censorious and more extended in their charity; and this is an excellent advantage indeed. The work of God has been glorious in its variety: it has the more displayed the manifold and unsearchable wisdom of God, and wrought more charity among his people.

There is a great difference among those who are converted, as to the degree of hope and satisfaction they have concerning their own state. Some have a high degree of satisfaction in this matter almost constantly; and yet it is rare that any enjoy so full an assurance of their interest in Christ, that self-examination should seem needless to them; unless it be at particular seasons, while in the actual enjoyment of some great discovery God gives of his glory and rich grace in Christ, to the drawing forth of extraordinary acts of grace. But the greater part, as they sometimes fall into dead frames of spirit, are frequently exercised with scruples and fears concerning their condition.

They generally have an awful apprehension of the dreadful nature of a false hope; and there has been observable in most a great caution, lest in giving an account of their experiences, they should say too much, and use too strong terms. Many, after they have related their experiences, have been greatly afflicted with fears, lest they have played the hypocrite, and used stronger terms than their case would fairly allow of; and yet could not find how they could correct themselves.

I think the main ground of the doubts and fears, that persons after their conversion have been exercised with, about their own state, has been that they have found so much

corruption remaining in their hearts. At first, their souls seem to be all alive, their hearts are fixed, and their affections flowing; they seem to live quite above the world, and meet with but little difficulty in religious exercises; and they are ready to think it will always be so. Though they are truly abased under a sense of their vileness, by reason of former acts of sin; yet they are not then sufficiently sensible, what corruption still remains in their hearts; and therefore, are surprised when they find that they begin to be in dull and dead frames, troubled with wandering thoughts at the time of public and private worship, and utterly unable to keep themselves from them. When they find themselves unaffected, while yet there is the greatest occasion to be affected; and when they feel worldly dispositions working in them—pride, envy, stirrings of revenge, or some ill spirit towards some person that has injured them, as well as other workings of indwelling sin—their hearts are almost sunk with the disappointment; and they are ready presently to think that they are mere hypocrites.

They are ready to argue, If God had, indeed, done such great things for them, as they hoped, such ingratitude would be inconsistent with it. They complain of the hardness and wickedness of their hearts; and say there is so much corruption, that it seems to them impossible there should be any goodness there. Many of them seem to be much more sensible how corrupt their hearts are, than before they were converted; and some have been too ready to be impressed with fear, that instead of becoming better they are grown much worse, and make it an argument against the goodness of their state. But in truth the case seems plainly to be, that now they feel the pain of their own wound; they have a watchful eye upon their hearts that they did not use to have. They take more notice what sin is there, which is now more burdensome to them; they strive more against, and feel more of its strength.

They are somewhat surprised that they should in this respect find themselves so different from the idea they generally had entertained of godly persons. For, though grace be indeed of a far more excellent nature than they imagined; yet, those who are godly have much less of it, and much more remaining corruption than they thought. They never realized it, that persons were wont to meet with such difficulties after they were once converted. When they are thus exercised with doubts about their state, through the deadness of their frames; as long as these frames last, they are commonly unable to satisfy themselves of the truth of their grace, by all their self-examination. When they hear the signs of grace laid down for them to try themselves by, they are often so clouded, that they do not know how to apply them. They hardly know

whether they have such and such things or no, and whether they have experienced them or not. That which was the sweetest, best, and most distinguishing in their experiences, they cannot recover a sense of. But on a return of the influences of the Spirit of God, to revive the lively actings of grace, the light breaks through the cloud, and doubting and darkness soon vanish away.

Persons are often revived out of their dead and dark frames, by religious conversation; while they are talking of divine things, or ever they are aware, their souls are carried away into holy exercises with abundant pleasure. And oftentimes, while relating their past experiences to their christian brethren, they have a sense of them revived, and the same experiences in a degree again renewed. Sometimes, while persons are exercised in mind with several objections against the goodness of their state, they have scriptures one after another coming to their minds, to answer their scruples, and unravel their difficulties, exceedingly apposite and proper to their circumstances. By these means, their darkness is scattered; and often before the bestowment of any new remarkable comforts, especially after long continued deadness and ill frames, there are renewed humblings, in a great sense of their own exceeding vileness and unworthiness, as before their first comforts were bestowed.

Many in the country have entertained a mean thought of this great work, from what they have heard of impressions made on persons' imaginations. But there have been exceeding great misrepresentations, and innumerable false reports, concerning that matter. It is not, that I know of, the profession or opinion of any one person in the town, that any weight is to be laid on any thing seen with the bodily eyes. I know the contrary to be a received and established principle amongst us. I cannot say that there have been no instances of persons who have been ready to give too much heed to vain and useless imaginations; but they have been easily corrected, and I conclude it will not be wondered at, that a congregation should need a guide in such cases, to assist them in distinguishing wheat from chaff. But such impressions on the imagination as have been more usual, seem to me to be plainly no other than what is to be expected in human nature in such circumstances, and what is the natural result of the strong exercise of the mind, and impressions on the heart.

I do not suppose, that they themselves imagined they saw any thing with their bodily eyes; but only have had within them ideas strongly impressed, and as it were lively pictures in their minds. For instance, some when in great terrors, through fear of hell, have had lively ideas of a dreadful furnace. Some when their hearts have been strongly impressed, and their affections

greatly moved with a sense of the beauty and excellency of Christ, have had their imaginations so wrought upon, that, together with a sense of his glorious spiritual perfections, there has arisen in the mind an idea of one of glorious majesty, and of a sweet and gracious aspect. Some, when they have been greatly affected with Christ's death, have at the same time a lively idea of Christ of hanging upon the cross, and his blood running from his wounds. Surely such things will not be wondered at by them who have observed, how any strong affections about temporal matters will excite lively ideas and pictures of different things in the mind.

The vigorous exercises of the mind, doubtless, more strongly impress it with imaginary ideas in some than others, which probably may arise from the difference of constitution, and seem evidently in some, partly to arise from their peculiar circumstances. When persons have been exercised with extreme terrors, and there is a sudden change to light and joy, the imagination seems more susceptive of strong ideas; the inferior powers and even the frame of the body, are much more affected, than when the same persons have as great spiritual light and joy afterwards; of which it might, perhaps, be easy to give a reason. The forementioned Reverend Messrs. Lord and Owen—who, I believe, are esteemed persons of learning and discretion where they are best known—declared, that they found these impressions on persons' imaginations quite different things from what fame had before represented to them, and that they were what none need to wonder at—or to that purpose.

There have indeed been some few instances of impressions on persons' imaginations, which have been somewhat mysterious to me, and I have been at a loss about them. For, though it has been exceeding evident to me, by many things that appeared both then and afterwards, that they indeed had a greater sense of the spiritual excellency of divine things accompanying them; yet I have not been able well to satisfy myself, whether their imaginary ideas have been more than could naturally arise from their spiritual sense of things. However, I have used the utmost caution in such cases; great care has been taken both in public and in private to teach persons the difference between what is spiritual and what is merely imaginary. I have often warned persons not to lay the stress of their hope on any ideas of any outward glory, or any external thing whatsoever, and have met with no opposition in such instructions. But it is not strange if some weaker persons, in giving an account of their experiences, have not so prudently distinguished between the spiritual and imaginary part; of which some who have not been well affected to religion might take advantage.

There has been much talk in many parts of the country, as though the people have symbolised with the Quakers, and the Quakers themselves have been moved with such reports; and some came here, once and again, hoping to find good waters to fish in; but without the least success, and have left off coming. There have also been reports spread about the country, as though the first occasion of so remarkable a concern was an apprehension that the world was near to an end; which was altogether a false report. Indeed, after this concern became so general and extraordinary, as related, the minds of some were filled with speculation, what so great a dispensation of divine providence might forebode; and some reports were heard from abroad, as though certain divines and others thought the conflagration was nigh; but such reports were never generally looked upon worthy of notice.

The work which has now been wrought on souls, is evidently the same that was wrought in my venerable predecessor's days, as I have had abundant opportunity to know, having been in the ministry here two years with him, and so conversed with a considerable number whom my grandfather thought to be savingly converted at that time; and having been particularly acquainted with the experiences of many who were converted under his ministry before. And I know no one of them, who in the least doubts of its being the same spirit and the same work. Persons have now no otherwise been subject to impressions on their imaginations than formerly: the work is of the same nature, and has not been attended with any extraordinary circumstances, excepting such as are analogous to the extraordinary degree of it before described. And God's people who were formerly converted, have now partaken of the same shower of divine blessing—in the renewing, strengthening, edifying influences of the Spirit of God—that others have in his converting influences; and the work here has also been plainly the same with that of other places which have been mentioned, as partaking of the same blessing. I have particularly conversed with persons, about their experiences, who belong to all parts of the country, and in various parts of Connecticut, where a religious concern has lately appeared; and have been informed of the experiences of many others by their own pastors.

It is easily perceived by the foregoing account, that it is very much the practice of the people here, to converse freely one with another about their spiritual experiences; which many have been disgusted at. But however our people may have, in some respects, gone to extremes in it, it is, doubtless, a practice that the circumstances of this town, and neighbouring towns, have naturally led them into. Whatsoever people have their minds engaged to such a degree in the same affair.

that it is ever uppermost in their thoughts; they will naturally make it the subject of conversation when they get together, in which they will grow more and more free. Restraints will soon vanish; and they will not conceal from one another what they meet with. And it has been a practice which, in the general, has been attended with many good effects, and what God has greatly blessed amongst us: but it must be confessed, there may have been some ill consequences of it; which yet are rather to be laid to the indiscreet management of it than to the *practice itself;* and none can wonder, if among such a multitude some fail of exercising so much *prudence* in choosing the time, manner, and occasion of such discourse as is desirable.

SECT. III.

This Work further illustrated in Particular Instances.

But to give a clear *idea* of the nature and manner of the operation of God's Spirit, in this wonderful effusion of it, I would give an account of two *particular instances.* The first is an *adult person*, a young woman whose name was ABIGAIL HUTCHINSON. I fix upon her especially because she is now dead, and so it may be more fit to speak freely of her than of living instances: though I am under far greater disadvantages, on other accounts, to give a full and clear narrative of her experiences, than I might of some others; nor can any account be given but what has been retained in the memories of her friends, of what they have heard her express in her lifetime.

She was of an intelligent family: there could be nothing in her education that tended to *enthusiasm*, but rather to the contrary extreme. It is in no wise the temper of the family to be ostentatious of experiences, and it was far from being her temper. She was, before her conversion, to the observation of her neighbours, of a sober and inoffensive conversation; and was a still, quiet, reserved person. She had long been infirm of body, but her infirmity had never been observed at all to incline her to be notional or fanciful, or to occasion any thing of religious melancholy. She was under awakenings scarcely a week, before there seemed to be plain evidence of her being savingly converted.

She was first awakened in the winter season, on Monday, by something she heard her brother say of the necessity of being in good earnest in seeking regenerating grace, together with the news of the conversion of the young woman before mentioned, whose conversion so generally affected most of the

young people here. This news wrought much upon her, and stirred up a spirit of envy in her towards this young woman, whom she thought very unworthy of being distinguished from others by such a mercy; but withal it engaged her in a firm resolution to do her utmost to obtain the same blessing. Considering with herself what course she should take, she thought, that she had not a sufficient knowledge of the principles of religion, to render her capable of conversion; whereupon she resolved thoroughly to search the scriptures; and accordingly immediately began at the beginning of the Bible, intending to read it through. She continued thus till Thursday; and then there was a sudden alteration, by a great increase of her concern, in an extraordinary sense of her own sinfulness, particularly the sinfulness of her nature, and wickedness of her heart. This came upon her, as she expressed it, as a flash of lightning, and struck her into an exceeding terror. Upon which she left off reading the Bible, in course, as she had begun; and turned to the New Testament, to see if she could not find some relief there for her distressed soul.

Her *great terror*, she said, *was, that she had sinned against God:* her distress grew more and more for three days; until she saw "nothing but blackness of darkness before her, and her very flesh trembled for fear of God's wrath; she wondered and was astonished at herself, that she had been so concerned for her body, and had applied so often to physicians to heal that, and had neglected her soul." Her sinfulness appeared with a very awful aspect to her, especially in three things; viz. her *original sin*, and her sin in *murmuring* at God's providence —in the weakness and afflictions she had been under—and in *want of duty to parents*, though others had looked upon her to excel in dutifulness. On Saturday, she was so earnestly engaged in reading the Bible and other books, that she continued in it, searching for something to relieve her, till her eyes were so dim, that she could not know the letters. While she was thus engaged in reading, prayer, and other religious exercises, she thought of those words of Christ, wherein he warns us not "to be as the heathen, that think they shall be heard for their much speaking;" which, she said, led her to see that she had trusted to her own prayers and religious performances, and now she was put to a *nonplus*, and knew not which way to turn herself, or where to seek relief.

While her mind was in this posture, her heart, she said, seemed to fly to the minister for refuge, hoping that *he* could give her some relief. She came the same day to her brother, with the countenance of a person in distress, expostulating with him, why he had not told her more of her sinfulness, and earnestly enquiring of him what she should do. She seemed that day to feel in herself an enmity against the Bible, which

greatly affrighted her. Her sense of her own exceeding sinfulness continued increasing from Thursday till Monday, and she gave this account of it: That it had been her opinion, till now, she was not guilty of Adam's sin, nor any way concerned in it, because she was not *active* in it; but that now she saw she was guilty of that sin, and all over defiled by it; and the sin which she brought into the world with her was alone sufficient to condemn her.

On the sabbath day she was so ill, that her friends thought it not best that she should go to public worship, of which she seemed very desirous: but when she went to bed on the sabbath night, she took up a resolution, that she would the next morning go to the minister, hoping to find some relief there. As she awaked on Monday morning, a little before day, she wondered within herself at the easiness and calmness she felt in her mind, which was of that kind she never felt before. As she thought of this, such words as these were in her mind: "The words of the Lord are pure words, health to the soul, and marrow to the bones:" and then these words, "The blood of Christ cleanses from all sin;" which were accompanied with a lively sense of the excellency of Christ, and his sufficiency to satisfy for the sins of the whole world. She then thought of that expression, "It is a pleasant thing for the eyes to behold the sun;" which words then seemed to her to be very applicable to Jesus Christ. By these things her mind was led into such contemplations and views of Christ, as filled her exceeding full of joy. She told her brother, in the morning, that she had *seen* (i. e. in realizing views by faith) *Christ the last night*, and that she had "really thought that she had not knowledge enough to be converted;" but, says she, "God can make it quite easy!" On Monday she felt all day a constant sweetness in her soul. She had a repetition of the same discoveries of Christ three mornings together, and much in the same manner, at each time waking a little before day; but brighter and brighter every time.

At the last time, on Wednesday morning, while in the enjoyment of a spiritual view of Christ's glory and fulness, her soul was filled with distress for Christless persons, to consider what a miserable condition they were in. She felt a strong inclination immediately to go forth to warn sinners; and proposed it the next day to her brother to assist her in going from house to house; but her brother restrained her, by telling her of the unsuitableness of such a method. She told one of her sisters that day, that she loved "all mankind, but especially the people of God." Her sister asked her, Why she loved all mankind? She replied, "Because God had made them." After this, there happened to come into the shop where she was a work, three persons who were thought to have been lately con-

verted; her seeing of them as they stepped in one after another, so affected her, and so drew forth her love to them, that it overcame her, and she almost fainted. When they began to talk of the things of religion, it was more than she could bear; they were obliged to cease on that account. It was a very frequent thing with her to be overcome with a flow of affection to them whom she thought godly, in conversation with them, and sometimes only at the sight of them.

She had many extraordinary discoveries of the glory of God and Christ; sometimes, in some particular attributes, and sometimes in many. She gave an account, that once, as those four words passed through her mind, WISDOM, JUSTICE, GOODNESS, and TRUTH, her soul was filled with a sense of the glory of each of these divine attributes, but especially the last. Truth, said she, sunk the deepest! And, therefore, as these words passed, this was repeated, TRUTH, TRUTH! Her mind was so swallowed up with a sense of the glory of God's truth and other perfections, that she said it seemed as though her life was going, and that she saw it was easy with God to take away her life by discoveries of himself. Soon after this she went to a private religious meeting, and her mind was full of a sense and view of the glory of God all the time. When the exercise was ended, some asked her concerning what she had experienced; and she began to give them an account: but as she was relating it, it revived such a sense of the same things, that her strength failed; and they were obliged to take her and lay her upon the bed. Afterwards she was greatly affected, and rejoiced with these words, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain!"

She had several days together a sweet sense of the excellency and loveliness of Christ in his meekness, which disposed her continually to be repeating over these words, which were sweet to her, MEEK AND LOWLY IN HEART, MEEK AND LOWLY IN HEART. She once expressed herself to one of her sisters to this purpose, that she had continued whole days and whole nights in a constant ravishing view of the glory of God and Christ, having enjoyed as much as her life could bear. Once, as her brother was speaking of the dying love of Christ, she told him, She had such a sense of it, that the mere mentioning of it was ready to overcome her.

Once, when she came to me, she said, that at such and such a time, she thought she saw as much of God, and had as much joy and pleasure, as was possible in this life; and that yet afterwards, God discovered himself far more abundantly. She saw the same things as before, yet more clearly, and in a far more excellent and delightful manner; and was filled with a more exceeding sweetness. She likewise gave me such an account of the sense she once had, from day to day, of the

glory of Christ, and of God, in his various attributes, that it seemed to me she dwelt for days together in a kind of beatific vision of God; and seemed to have, as I thought, as immediate an intercourse with him, as a child with a father. At the same time, she appeared most remote from any high thought of herself, and of her own sufficiency; but was like a little child, and expressed a great desire to be instructed, telling me that she longed very often to come to me for instruction, and wanted to live at my house, that I might tell her what was her duty.

She often expressed a sense of the glory of God appearing in the trees, the growth of the fields, and other works of God's hands. She told her sister who lived near the heart of the town, that she once thought it a pleasant thing to live in the middle of the town, But now, said she, I think it much more pleasant to sit and see the wind blowing the trees, and to behold in the country what God has made. She had sometimes the powerful breathings of the spirit of God on her soul, while reading the scripture; and would express her sense of the certain truth and divinity thereof. She sometimes would appear with a pleasant smile on her countenance; and once, when her sister took notice of it, and asked why she smiled, she replied, I am brimfull of a sweet feeling within! She often used to express how good and sweet it was to lie low before God, and the lower (says she) the better! and that it was pleasant to think of lying in the dust, all the days of her life, mourning for sin. She was wont to manifest a great sense of her own meanness and dependence. She often expressed an exceeding compassion and pitiful love, which she found in her heart towards persons in a Christless condition. This was sometimes so strong, that, as she was passing by such in the streets, or those that she feared were such, she would be overcome by the sight of them. She once said, that she longed to have the whole world saved, she wanted, as it were, to pull them all to her; she could not bear to have one lost.

She had great longings to die, that she might be with Christ: which increased until she thought she did not know how to be patient to wait till God's time. But once, when she felt those longings, she thought with herself, If I long to die, why do I go to physicians? Whence she concluded that her longings for death were not well regulated. After this she often put it to herself, which she should choose, whether to live or to die, to be sick, or to be well; and she found she could not tell, till at the last she found herself disposed to say these words; I am quite willing to live, and quite willing to die; quite willing to be sick, and quite willing to be well; and quite willing for any thing that God will bring upon me! And then, said she, I felt myself perfectly easy, in a full submission to the will

of God. She then lamented much, that she had been so eager in her longings for death, as it argued want of such a resignation to God as ought to be. She seemed henceforward to continue in this resigned frame till death.

After this, her illness increased upon her: and once, after she had before spent the greater part of the night in extreme pain, she waked out of a little sleep with these words in her heart and mouth: "I am willing to suffer for Christ's sake, I am willing to spend and be spent for Christ's sake; I am willing to spend my life, even my very life, for Christ's sake!" And though she had an extraordinary resignation, with respect to life or death, yet the thoughts of dying were exceeding sweet to her. At a time when her brother was reading in Job, concerning worms feeding on the dead body, she appeared with a pleasant smile: and being asked about it, she said, It was sweet to her to think of her being in such circumstances. At another time, when her brother mentioned the danger there seemed to be, that the illness she laboured under, might be an occasion of her death, it filled her with joy that almost overcame her. At another time, when she met a company following a corpse to the grave, she said, it was sweet to her to think, that they would in a little time follow her in like manner.

Her illness, in the latter part of it, was seated much in her throat; and an inward swelling filled up the pipe, so that she could swallow nothing but what was perfectly liquid, and but very little of that, with great and long strugglings. That which she took in fled out at her nostrils, till at last she could swallow nothing at all. She had a raging appetite for food: so that she told her sister, when talking with her about her circumstances, that the worst bit would be sweet to her; but yet, when she saw that she could not swallow it, she seemed to be as perfectly contented without it, as if she had no appetite. Others were greatly moved to see what she underwent, and were filled with admiration at her unexampled patience. At a time when she was striving in vain to get down a little of something liquid, and was very much spent with it; she looked up on her sister with a smile, saying, O sister, this is for my good! At another time, when her sister was speaking of what she underwent, she told her, that she lived a heaven upon earth for all that. She used sometimes to say to her sister, under her extreme sufferings, It is good to be so! Her sister once asked her, why she said so; why, says she, because God would have it so: it is best that things should be as God would have them: it looks best to me. After her confinement, as they were leading her from the bed to the door, she seemed overcome by the sight of things abroad, as shewing forth the glory of the Being who had made them. As she lay on her death-

bed, she would often say these words, God is my friend! And once looking upon her sister with a smile, said, O sister, How good it is! How sweet and comfortable it is to consider, and think of heavenly things! and used this argument to persuade her sister to be much in such meditations.

She expressed on her death-bed, an exceeding longing, both for persons in a natural state, that they might be converted; and for the godly, that they might see and know more of God. And when those who looked on themselves as in a Christless state came to see her, she would be greatly moved with compassionate affection. One in particular, who seemed to be in great distress about the state of her soul, and had come to see her from time to time, she desired her sister to persuade not to come any more, because the sight of her so wrought on her compassions, that it overcame her nature. The same week that she died, when she was in distressing circumstances as to her body, some of the neighbours who came to see her, asked if she was willing to die? She replied, that she was quite willing either to live or die; she was willing to be in pain; she was willing to be so always as she was then, if that was the will of God. She willed what God willed. They asked her whether she was willing to die that night? She answered, Yes, if it be God's will. And seemed to speak all with that perfect composure of spirit, and with such a cheerful and pleasant countenance, that it filled them with admiration.

She was very weak a considerable time before she died, having pined away with famine and thirst, so that her flesh seemed to be dried upon her bones; and therefore could say but little, and manifested her mind very much by signs. She said she had matter enough to fill up all her time with talk, if she had but strength. A few days before her death, some asked her, Whether she held her integrity still? Whether she was not afraid of death? she answered to this purpose, that she had not the least degree of fear of death. They asked her, Why she would be so confident? She answered, If I should say otherwise, I should speak contrary to what I know. There is, says she, indeed, a dark entry, that looks something dark, but on the other side there appears such a bright shining light, that I cannot be afraid! She said not long before she died, that she used to be afraid how she should grapple with death; But, says she, God has shewed me that he can make it easy in great pain. Several days before she died, she could scarcely say any thing but just Yes, and No, to questions that were asked her; for she seemed to be dying for three days together. But seemed to continue in an admirably sweet composure of soul, without any interruption, to the last; and died as a person that went to sleep, without any struggling, about noon, on Friday, June 27, 1735.

She had long been infirm, and often had been exercised with great pain; but she died chiefly of famine. It was, doubtless, partly owing to her bodily weakness, that her nature was so often overcome, and ready to sink with gracious affection; but yet the truth was, that she had more grace, and greater discoveries of God and Christ, than the present frail state did well consist with. She wanted to be where strong grace might have more liberty, and be without the clog of a weak body; there she longed to be, and there she doubtless now is. She was looked upon amongst us, as a very eminent instance of christian experience; but this is but a very broken and imperfect account I have given of her: her eminency would much more appear, if her experiences were fully related, as she was wont to express, and manifest them, while living. I once read this account to some of her pious neighbours, who were acquainted with her, who said, to this purpose, that the picture fell much short of the life; and particularly that it much failed of duly representing her humility, and that admirable lowliness of heart, that at all times appeared in her. But there are, blessed be God! many living instances, of much the like nature, and in some things no less extraordinary.

But I now proceed to the other instance, that of the little child before mentioned. Her name is PHEBE BARTLET, daughter of William Bartlet. I shall give the account as I took it from the mouth of her parents, whose veracity none who know them doubt of.

She was born in March, 1731. About the latter end of April, or beginning of May, 1735, she was greatly affected by the talk of her brother, who had been hopefully converted a little before at about eleven years of age, and then seriously talked to her about the great things of religion. Her parents did not know of it at that time, and were not wont, in the counsels they gave to their children, particularly to direct themselves to her, being so young, and as they supposed, not capable of understanding. But after her brother had talked to her, they observed her very earnestly listen to the advice they gave to the other children; and she was observed very constantly to retire, several times in a day, as was concluded for secret prayer. She grew more and more engaged in religion, and was more frequent in her closet; till at last she was wont to visit it five or six times a day: and was so engaged in it, that nothing would at any time divert her from her stated closet exercises. Her mother often observed and watched her, when such things occurred, as she thought most likely to divert her, either by putting it out of her thoughts, or otherwise engaging her inclinations; but never could ob-

serve her to fail. She mentioned some very remarkable instances.

She once of her own accord spake of her unsuccessfulness, in that she could not find God, or to that purpose. But on Thursday, the last day of July, about the middle of the day, the child being in the closet where it used to retire, its mother heard it speaking aloud; which was unusual, and never had been observed before. And her voice seemed to be as of one exceedingly importunate and engaged; but her mother could distinctly hear only these words, spoken in a childish manner, but with extraordinary earnestness, and out of distress of soul, Pray, blessed Lord, give me salvation! I pray, beg, pardon all my sins! When the child had done prayer, she came out of the closet, sat down by her mother, and cried out aloud. Her mother very earnestly asked her several times, what the matter was, before she would make any answer; but she continued crying and writhing her body to and fro, like one in anguish of spirit. Her mother then asked her, whether she was afraid that God would not give her salvation. She then answered, Yes, I am afraid I shall go to hell! Her mother then endeavoured to quiet her, and told her she would not have her cry, she must be a good girl, and pray every day, and she hoped God would give her salvation. But this did not quiet her at all; she continued thus earnestly crying, and talking on for some time, till at length she suddenly ceased crying, and began to smile, and presently said with a smiling countenance, Mother, the kingdom of heaven is come to me! Her mother was surprised at the sudden alteration, and at the speech; and knew not what to make of it; but at first said nothing to her. The child presently spake again, and said there is another come to me, and there is another, there is three; and being asked what she meant, she answered, one is, Thy will be done, and there is another, Enjoy him for ever; by which it seems, that when the child said, there is three come to me; she meant three passages of her catechism that came to her mind.

After the child had said this, she retired again into her closet; and her mother went over to her brother's, who was next neighbour; and when she came back, the child, being come out of the closet, meets her mother with this cheerful speech; I can find God now! referring to what she had before complained of, that she could not find God. Then the child spoke again, and said, I love God! her mother asked her, how well she loved God, whether she loved God better than her father and mother, she said yes. Then she asked her whether she loved God better than her little sister Rachel.—She answered, Yes, better than any thing! Then her elder sister, referring to her saying, she could find God now, asked her, where she could find God. She answered, in heaven:

Why, said she, have you been in heaven. No, said the child. By this it seems not to have been any imagination of any thing seen with bodily eyes, that she called God, when she said, I can find God now. Her mother asked her, whether she was afraid of going to hell, and if that had made her cry? She answered, Yes, I was; but now I shan't. Her mother asked her, whether she thought that God had given her salvation: She answered, Yes. Her mother asked her, When. She answered, To-day. She appeared all that afternoon exceeding cheerful and joyful. One of the neighbours asked her, how she felt herself? She answered, I feel better than I did. The neighbour asked her what made her feel better. She answered, God makes me. That evening as she lay a-bed, she called one of her little cousins to her, who was present in the room, as having something to say to him; and when he came, she told him that heaven was better than earth. The next day, her mother asked her what God made her for? She answered, To serve him; and added, every body should serve God, and get an interest in Christ.

The same day the elder children, when they came home from school, seemed much affected with the extraordinary change that seemed to be made in Phebe. And her sister Abigail standing by, her mother took occasion to counsel her, now to improve her time, to prepare for another world. On which Phebe burst out in tears, and cried out, Poor Nabby! Her mother told her, she would not have her cry, she hoped that God would give Nabby salvation; but that did not quiet her, she continued earnestly crying for some time. When she had in a measure ceased, her sister Eunice being by her, she burst out again, and cried, Poor Eunice! and cried exceedingly; and when she had almost done, she went into another room, and there looked upon her sister Naomi: and burst out again, crying poor Amy! Her mother was greatly affected at such a behaviour in a child, and knew not what to say to her. One of the neighbours coming in a little after, asked her what she had cried for. She seemed at first backward to tell the reason; her mother told her she might tell that person, for he had given her an apple: upon which she said, she cried because she was afraid they would go to hell.

At night, a certain minister, who was occasionally in the town, was at the house, and talked with her of religious things. After he was gone, she sat leaning on the table, with tears running from her eyes; and being asked what made her cry, she said, It was thinking about God. The next day, being Saturday, she seemed great part of the day to be in a very affectionate frame, had four turns of crying, and seemed to endeavour to curb herself, and hide her tears, and was very backward to talk of the occasion. On the Sabbath-day she was asked,

whether she believed in God; she answered, Yes. And being told that Christ was the Son of God, she made ready answer, and said, I know it.

From this time there appeared a very remarkable abiding change in the child. She has been very strict upon the Sabbath; and seems to long for the Sabbath-day before it comes, and will often in the week time be enquiring how long it is to the Sabbath-day, and must have the days between particularly counted over, before she will be contented. She seems to love God's house, and is very eager to go thither. Her mother once asked her, why she had such a mind to go? whether it was not to see fine folks? She said, No, it was to hear Mr. Edwards preach. When she is in the place of worship, she is very far from spending her time there as children at her age usually do, but appears with an attention that is very extraordinary for such a child. She also appears very desirous at all opportunities to go to private religious meetings; and is very still and attentive at home, during prayer, and has appeared affected in time of family-prayer. She seems to delight much in hearing religious conversation. When I once was there with some strangers, and talked to her something of religion, she seemed more than ordinarily attentive; and when we were gone, she looked very wistfully after us, and said, I wish hey would come again! Her mother asked her, why? Says she, I love to hear 'em talk.

She seems to have very much of the fear of God before her eyes, and an extraordinary dread of sinning against him; of which her mother mentioned the following remarkable instance. Some time in August, the last year, she went with some bigger children, to get some plumbs in a neighbour's lot, knowing nothing of any harm in what she did; but when she brought some of the plumbs into the house, her mother mildly reproved her, and told her that she must not get plumbs without leave, because it was sin: God had commanded her not to steal. The child seemed greatly surprised and burst out in tears, and cried out, I wont have these plumbs! and turning to her sister Eunice, very earnestly, said to her, Why did you ask me to go to that plumb-tree? I should not have gone if you had not asked me. The other children did not seem to be much affected or concerned; but there was no pacifying Phebe. Her mother told her, she might go and ask leave, and then it would not be sin for her to eat them; and sent one of the children to that end; and, when she returned, her mother told her, that the owner had given leave, now she might eat them, and it would not be stealing. This stilled her a little while; but presently she broke out again into an exceeding fit of crying. Her mother asked her, what made her cry again? Why she cried now, since they had asked leave? What it was that trou-

bled her now! And asked her several times very earnestly, before she made any answer; but at last said, it was because, BECAUSE IT WAS SIN. She continued a considerable time crying; and said, she would not go again if Eunice asked her an hundred times; and she retained her aversion to that fruit for a considerable time, under the remembrance of her former sin.

She sometimes appears greatly affected, and delighted with texts of scripture that come to her mind. Particularly about the beginning of November, that text came to her mind, Rev. iii. 20. Behold I stand at the door and knock: If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in, and sup with him, and he with me. She spoke of it to those of the family, with great appearance of joy, a smiling countenance, and elevation of voice; and afterwards she went to another room, where her mother overheard her talking very earnestly to the children about it; and particularly heard her say to them, three or four times over, with an air of exceeding joy and admiration, Why it is to sup with God. Some time about the middle of winter, very late in the night, when all were a-bed, her mother perceived she was awake, and heard her, as though she was weeping. She called to her and asked her what was the matter. She answered with a low voice, so that her mother could not hear what she said; but thinking that it might be occasioned by some spiritual affection, said no more to her; but perceived her to lie awake, and to continue in the same frame for a considerable time. The next morning, she asked her whether she did not cry the last night. The child answered, Yes, I did cry a little, for I was thinking about God and Christ, and they loved me. Her mother asked her, whether to think of God and Christ loving her made her cry? she answered, Yes, it does sometimes.

She has often manifested a great concern for the good of others's souls: and has been wont many times affectionately to counsel the other children. Once, about the latter end of September, the last year, when she and some others of the children were in a room by themselves, husking Indian corn, the child, after a while, came out and sat by the fire. Her mother took notice that she appeared with a more than ordinary serious and pensive countenance; but at last she broke silence, and said, I have been talking to Nabby and Eunice. Her mother asked her what she had said to them. Why, said she, I told them they must pray, and prepare to die; that they had but a little while to live in this world, and they must be always ready. When Nabby came out, her mother asked her, whether she had said that to them. Yes, said she, she said that, and a great deal more. At other times, the child took opportunities to talk to the other children about the great concern of their souls, so as

much to affect them. She was once exceeding importunate with her mother to go with her sister Naomi to pray: her mother endeavoured to put her off; but she pulled her by the sleeve, and seemed as if she would by no means be denied. At last her mother told her, that Amy must go and pray by herself; but, says the child, she will not go; and persisted earnestly to beg of her mother to go with her.

She has discovered an uncommon degree of a spirit of charity, particularly on the following occasion. A poor man that lives in the woods, had lately lost a cow that the family much depended on; and being at the house, he was relating his misfortune, and telling of the straits and difficulties they were reduced to by it. She took much notice of it, and it wrought exceedingly on her compasion. After she had attentively heard him awhile, she went away to her father, who was in the shop, and entreated him to give that man a cow: and told him that the poor man had no cow! that the hunters, or something else, had killed his cow! and entreated him to give him one of theirs. Her father told her that they could not spare one. Then she entreated him to let him and his family come and live at his house: and had much more talk of the same nature, whereby she manifested bowels of compassion to the poor.

She has manifested great love to her minister, particularly when I returned from my long journey for my health, the last fall. When she heard of it, she appeared very joyful at the news, and told the children of it, with an elevated voice, as the most joyful tidings; repeating it over and over, Mr. Edwards is come home! Mr. Edwards is come home! She still continues very constant in secret prayer, so far as can be observed, for she seems to have no desire that others should observe her when she retires, being a child of a reserved temper. Every night before she goes to bed, she will say her catechism, and will by no means miss. She never forgot it but once, and then, after she was a-bed, thought of it, and cried out in tears, I han't said my catechism! and would not be quieted till her mother asked her the catechism as she lay in bed. She sometimes appears to be in doubt about the condition of her soul; and when asked, whether she thinks that she is prepared for death, speaks something doubtfully about it. At other times she seems to have no doubt; but when asked, replies, Yes, without hesitation.

In the former part of this great work of God amongst us, till it got to its height, we seemed to be wonderfully smiled upon and blessed in all respects. Satan seemed to be unusually restrained; persons, who before had been involved in melancholy, seemed to be as it were waked up out of it; and those who had been entangled with extraordinary temptations, seem-

ed wonderfully freed. And not only so, but it was the most remarkable time of health that ever I knew since I have been in the town. We ordinarily have several bills put up, every sabbath, for sick persons; but now we have not so much as one for many sabbaths together. But after this it seemed to be otherwise.

When this work of God appeared to be at its greatest height, a poor weak man who belongs to the town, being in great spiritual trouble, was hurried with violent temptations to cut his own throat, and made an attempt, but did not do it effectually. He, after this, continued a considerable time exceedingly overwhelmed with melancholy; but has now for a long time been very greatly delivered, by the light of God's countenance lifted up upon him, and has expressed a great sense of his sin in so far yielding to temptation; and there are in him all hopeful evidences of his having been made a subject of saving mercy.

In the latter part of May, it began to be very sensible that the Spirit of God was gradually withdrawing from us, and after this time Satan seemed to be more let loose, and raged in a dreadful manner. The first instance wherein it appeared, was a person putting an end to his own life by cutting his throat. He was a gentleman of more than common understanding, of strict morals, religious in his behaviour, and an useful and honourable person in the town; but was of a family that are exceedingly prone to the disease of melancholy, and his mother was killed with it. He had, from the beginning of this extraordinary time, been exceedingly concerned about the state of his soul, and there were some things in his experience that appeared very hopeful; but he durst entertain no hope concerning his own good estate. Towards the latter part of his time, he grew much discouraged, and melancholy grew amain upon him, till he was wholly overpowered by it, and was in a great measure past a capacity of receiving advice, or being reasoned with to any purpose. The devil took the advantage, and drove him into despairing thoughts. He was kept awake at nights, meditating terror, so that he had scarce any sleep at all for a long time together; and it was observed at last, that he was scarcely well capable of managing his ordinary business, and was judged delirious by the coroner's inquest. The news of this extraordinarily affected the minds of people here, and struck them as it were with astonishment. After this, multitudes in this and other towns seemed to have it strongly suggested to them, and pressed upon them, to do as this person had done. And many who seemed to be under no melancholy, some pious persons, who had no special darkness or doubts about the goodness of their state—nor were under any special trouble or concern of mind about any thing

spiritual or temporal—had it urged upon them as if somebody had spoke to them, Cut your own throat, now is a good opportunity. Now! now! So that they were obliged to fight with all their might to resist it, and yet no reason suggested to them why they should do it.

About the same time, there were two remarkable instances of persons led away with strange enthusiastic delusions; one at Suffield, and another at South Hadley. That which has made the greatest noise in the country was the conduct of the man at South Hadley; whose delusion was that he thought himself divinely instructed to direct a poor man in melancholy and despairing circumstances, to say certain words in prayer to God, as recorded in Psal. cxvi. 4. for his own relief. The man is esteemed a pious man; I have seen this error of his; had a particular acquaintance with him; and I believe none would question his piety who had such acquaintance. He gave me a particular account of the manner how he was deluded, which is too long to be here inserted; but, in short, he exceedingly rejoiced, and was elevated with the extraordinary work carried on in this part of the country; and was possessed with an opinion, that it was the beginning of the glorious times of the church spoken of in scripture. He had read it as the opinion of some divines, that many in these times should be endued with extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, and had embraced the notion, though he had at first no apprehensions that any besides ministers would have such gifts. But he since exceedingly laments the dishonour he has done to God, and the wound he has given religion in it, and has lain low before God and man for it.

After these things, the instances of conversion were rare here in comparison of what they had before been, though that remarkable instance before noticed of the little child, was after this. The spirit of God not long after this time, appeared very sensible withdrawing from all parts of the country, though we have heard of the work going on in some places of Connecticut, and that it continues to be carried on even to this day. But religion remained here, and I believe in some other places, the main subject of conversation for several months after. And there were some turns, wherein God's work seemed to revive, and we were ready to hope that all was going to be renewed again; yet, in the main, there was a gradual decline of that general, engaged, lively spirit in religion, which had been. Several things have happened since, which have diverted people's minds, and turned their conversation more to other affairs; particularly, his excellency the Governor's coming up, and the committee of general court, on the treaty with the indians.—Afterwards, the Springfield controversy; and since that, our people in this town have been en-

gaged in the building of a new meeting-house. Some other occurrences might be mentioned, that have seemed to have this effect. But as to those who have been thought converted at this time, they generally seem to have had an abiding change wrought on them. I have had particular acquaintance with many of them since; and they generally appear to be persons who have a new sense of things, new apprehensions and views of God, of the divine attributes, of Jesus Christ, and the great things of the gospel. They have a new sense of their truth, and they affect them in a new manner; though it is very far from being always alike with them, neither can they revive a sense of things when they please. Their hearts are often touched, and sometimes filled, with new sweetness and delights; there seems to express an inward ardour and burning of heart, like to which they never experienced before; sometimes, perhaps, occasioned only by the mention of Christ's name, or some one of the divine perfections. There are new appetites, and a new kind of breathings and pantings of heart, and groanings that cannot be uttered. There is a new kind of inward labour and struggle of soul towards heaven and holiness.

Some who before were very rough in their temper and manners, seemed to be remarkably softened and sweetened. And some have had their souls exceedingly filled, and overwhelmed with light, love, and comfort; long since the work of God has ceased to be so remarkably carried on in a general way; and some have had much greater experiences of this nature than they had before. There is still a great deal of religious conversation continued in the town, amongst young and old: a religious disposition appears to be still maintained amongst our people, by their holding frequent private religious meetings; and all sorts are generally worshipping God at such meetings, on sabbath-nights, and in the evening after our public lecture. Many children in the town still keep up such meetings among themselves. I know of no one young person in the town who has returned to former ways of looseness and extravagance in any respect; but we still remain a reformed people, and God has evidently made us a new people.

I cannot say that there has been no instance of any one person who has conducted himself unworthily; nor am I so vain as to imagine that we have not been mistaken in our good opinion concerning any; or that there are none who pass amongst us for sheep, that are indeed wolves in sheep's clothing; and who probably may, some time or other, discover themselves by their fruits. We are not so pure, but that we have great cause to be humbled and ashamed that we are so impure; nor so religious, but that those who watch for our halting may see things in us, whence they may take occasion

to reproach us and religion. But in the main, there has been a great and marvellous work of conversion and sanctification among the people here; and they have paid all due respect to those who have been blest of God to be the instruments of it. Both old and young have shewn a forwardness to hearken not only to my counsels, but even to my reproofs from the pulpit.

A great part of the country have not received the most favourable thoughts of this affair; and to this day may retain a jealousy concerning it, and prejudices against it. I have reason to think that the meanness and weakness of the instrument that has been made use of in this town, has prejudiced many against it; nor does it appear to me strange that it should be so. But yet the circumstance of this great work of God, is analogous to other circumstances of it. God has so ordered the manner of the work in many respects, as very signally and remarkably to shew it to be his own peculiar and immediate work; and to secure the glory of it wholly to his own almighty power, and sovereign grace. And whatever the circumstances and means have been, and though we are so unworthy, yet so hath it pleased God to work! And we are evidently a people blessed of the Lord! For here, in this corner of the world, God dwells and manifests his glory.

Thus, Reverend Sir, I have given a large and particular account of this remarkable affair; and yet, considering how manifold God's works have been amongst us, it is but a very brief one. I should have sent it much sooner, had I not been greatly hindered by illness in my family, and also in my own person. It is probably much larger than you expected, and it may be than you would have chosen. I thought that the extraordinary nature of the thing, and the innumerable misrepresentations which have gone abroad of it, many of which doubtless have reached your ears, made it necessary that I should be particular. But I would leave it entirely with your wisdom to make what use of it you think best, to send a part of it to England, or all, or none, if you think it not worthy; or otherwise to dispose of it as you may think most for God's glory, and the interest of religion. If you are pleased to send any thing to the Rev. Dr. Guyse, I should be glad to have it signified to him as my humble desire, that since he and the congregation to which he preached, have been pleased to take so much notice of us, as they have, that they would also think of us at the throne of grace, and seek there for us, that God would not forsake us, but enable us to bring forth fruit answerable to our profession, and our mercies; and that our light may so shine before men, that others seeing our good works, may glorify our Father which is in heaven.

When I first heard of the notice the Rev. Dr. Watts and

Dr. Guyse took of God's mercies to us, I took occasion to inform our congregation of it in a discourse from these words—"A city that is set upon a hill cannot be hid." And having since seen a particular account of the notice which the Rev. Dr: Guyse and his congregation took of it, in a letter you wrote to my honoured Uncle Williams, I read that part of your letter to the congregation, and laboured as much as in me lay to enforce their duty from it. The congregation were very sensibly moved and affected at both times.

I humbly request of you, Reverend Sir, your prayers for this country, in its present melancholy circumstances, into which it is brought by the Springfield quarrel; which, doubtless, above all things that have happened, has tended to put a stop to the glorious work here, and to prejudice this country against it, and hinder the propagation of it. I also ask your prayers for this town, and would particularly beg an interest in them for him who is,

Honoured Sir,
With humble respect,
Your obedient Son and Servant,
JONATHAN EDWARDS.

NORTHAMPTON,
Nov. 6. 1736.

SOME THOUGHTS

CONCERNING THE

PRESENT REVIVAL OF RELIGION

IN

NEW ENGLAND,

AND THE

WAY IN WHICH IT OUGHT TO BE ACKNOWLEDGED AND PROMOTED;

HUMBLY OFFERED TO THE PUBLIC, IN A

TREATISE ON THAT SUBJECT.

Isa. xl. 3.—Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a high-way for our God.

THE PREFACE.

In the ensuing treatise, I condemn ministers assuming or taking too much upon them, and appearing as though they supposed they were the persons to whom it especially belonged to dictate, direct and determine; but perhaps shall be thought to be very guilty of it myself. And some, when they read this treatise, may be ready to say, that while I condemn this in others, I have the monopoly of it.——I confess that I have taken a great deal of liberty freely to express my thoughts concerning almost every thing appertaining to the wonderful work of God that has of late been carried on in the land, and to declare what has appeared to me to be the mind of God concerning the duty and obligations of all sorts of persons, and even those that are my superiors and fathers, ministers of the gospel, and civil rulers. But yet I hope the liberty I have taken is not greater than can be justified. In a free nation, such liberty of the press is allowed that every author takes leave without offence, freely to speak his opinion concerning the management of public affairs, and the duty of the legislature, and those that are at the head of the Administration, though vastly his superiors. As at this day, private subjects offer their sentiments to the public, from the press, concerning the management of the war with Spain: freely declaring what they think to be the duty of the Parliament, and the principal Ministers of State.—We in New-England are now engaged in a more important war. And I am sure, if we consider the sad jangling and confusion that has attended it, we shall confess that it is highly requisite somebody should speak his mind concerning the way in which it ought to be managed. Not only a few of the many particulars, which are the matter of strife, should be debated, on the one side and the other, in pamphlets (as has of late been done, with heat and fierceness enough)—which do not tend to bring the contention in general to an end, but rather to inflame it and increase the uproar—but something should be published to bring the affair in general, and the many things that attend it which are the subjects of debate, under a particular consideration. And certainly it is high time that this was done. If private persons may speak their minds without arrogance, much more may a minister of the kingdom of Christ speak freely about things of this nature, which do so nearly concern the interest of the kingdom

of his Lord and Master, at so important a juncture. If some elder minister had undertaken this, I acknowledge it would have been more proper; but I have heard of no such thing like to be done. And I hope therefore I shall be excused for undertaking such a work. I think that nothing I have said can justly be interpreted, as though I would impose my thoughts upon any, or did not suppose that others have equal right to think for themselves. We are not accountable one to another for our thoughts; but we must all give an account to Him who searches our hearts, and has doubtless his eye especially upon us at such an extraordinary season as this. If I have well confirmed my opinion concerning this Work, and the way in which it should be acknowledged and promoted, with scripture and reason, I hope those who read it will receive it as a manifestation of the mind and will of God. If others would hold forth further light to me in any of these particulars, I hope I should thankfully receive it. I think I have been made in some measure sensible, and much more of late than formerly, of my need of more wisdom than I have. I make it my rule to lay hold of light and embrace it, wherever I see it, though held forth by a child or an enemy. If I have assumed too much in the following discourse, and have spoken in a manner that savours of a spirit of pride, no wonder that others can better discern it than I myself. If it be so, I ask pardon, and beg the prayers of every Christian reader, that I may have more light, humility, and zeal; and that I may be favoured with such measures of the divine Spirit, as a minister of the gospel stands in need of, at such an extraordinary season.

THOUGHTS ON THE REVIVAL,

&c. &c.

PART I.

SHEWING THAT THE EXTRAORDINARY WORK WHICH HAS OF LATE BEEN GOING ON IN THIS LAND, IS A GLORIOUS WORK OF GOD.

THE error of those who have had ill thoughts of the great religious operation on the minds of men, which has been carried on of late in New England, (so far as the ground of such an error has been in the understanding, and not in the disposition,) seems fundamentally to lie in three things; First, In judging of this work, *a priori*. Secondly, In not taking the holy scriptures as a whole rule whereby to judge of such operations. Thirdly, In not justly separating and distinguishing the good from the bad.

SECT. I.

We should not judge of this Work by the supposed Causes, but by the Effects.

THEY have greatly erred in the way in which they have gone about to try this work, whether it be a work of the Spirit of God or no, viz. in judging of it *a priori;* from the way that it began, the instruments that have been employed, the means that have been used, and the methods that have been taken and succeeded, in carrying it on. Whereas, if we duly consider the matter, it will evidently appear that such a work is not to be judged of *a priori*, but *a posteriori*. We are to observe the *effect* wrought; and if, upon examination of that, it be found to be agreeable to the word of God, we are bound to rest in it as God's work: and shall be like to

be rebuked for our arrogance, if we refuse so to do till God shall explain to us how he has brought this effect to pass, or why he has made use of such and such means in doing it. These texts are enough to cause us, with trembling, to forbear such a way of proceeding, in judging of a work of God's Spirit, Isa. xl. 13, 14. "Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counsellor, hath taught him? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and shewed to him the way of understanding? John iii. 8. "The wind bloweth where it listest, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth." We hear the sound, we perceive the effect, and from thence we judge that the wind does indeed blow: without waiting, before we pass this judgment, first to be satisfied what should be the cause of the wind's blowing from such a part of the heavens, and how it should come to pass that it should blow in such a manner in such a time. To judge *a priori*, is a wrong way of judging of any of the works of God. We are not to resolve that we will first be satisfied how God brought this or the other effect to pass, and why he hath made it thus, or why it has pleased him to take such a course, and to use such and such means, before we will acknowledge his work, and give him the glory of it. This is too much for the clay to take upon it with respect to the potter. "God gives no account of his matters: His judgments are a great deep: He hath his way in the sea, and his path in the great waters, and his footsteps are not known; and who shall teach God knowledge, or enjoin him his way, or say unto him, What dost thou? We know not what is the way of the Spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child; even so we know not the work of God who maketh all." No wonder therefore if those that go this forbidden way to work, in judging of the present wonderful operation, are perplexed and confounded. We ought to take heed that we do not expose ourselves to the calamity of those who pried into the ark of God, when God mercifully returned it to Israel, after it had departed from them.

Indeed God has not taken that course, nor made use of those means, to begin and carry on this great work, which men in their wisdom would have thought most advisable, if he had asked their counsel; but quite the contrary. But it appears to me that the great God has wrought like himself, in the manner of his carrying on this work; so as very much to shew his own glory, exalt his own sovereignty, power, and all-sufficiency. He has poured contempt on all that human strength, wisdom, prudence, and sufficiency, which men have been wont to trust, and to glory in: so as greatly to cross

rebuke, and chastise the pride and other corruptions of men; Isa. ii. 17. "And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day." God doth thus, in intermingling in his providence so many stumbling-blocks with this work; in suffering so much of human weakness and infirmity to appear; and in ordering so many things that are mysterious to men's wisdom: In pouring out his Spirit chiefly on the common people, and bestowing his greatest and highest favours upon them, admitting them nearer to himself than the great, the honourable, the rich, and the learned; agreeable to that prophecy, Zech. xii. 7. "The Lord also shall save the tents of Judah first, that the glory of the house of David, and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, do not magnify themselves against Judah." Those who dwelt in the tents of Judah were the common people, who dwelt in the country, and were of inferior rank. The inhabitants of Jerusalem were their citizens, their men of wealth and figure; and Jerusalem also was the chief place of the habitation or resort of their priests and Levites, and their officers and judges; there sat the great Sanhedrim. The house of David were the highest rank of all, the royal family, and the great men about the king.——It is evident by the context, that this prophecy has respect to something further than saving the people out of the Babylonish captivity.

God in this work has begun at the lower end, and he has made use of the weak and foolish things of the world to carry it on. Some of the ministers chiefly employed, have been mere babes in age and standing; and some of them not so high in reputation among their brethren as many others; and God has suffered their infirmities to appear in the sight of others, so as much to displease them; and at the same time it has pleased God greatly to succeed them, while he has not so succeeded others who are generally reputed vastly their superiors. Yea, there is reason to think that it has pleased God to make use of the infirmities of some, particularly their imprudent zeal, and censorious spirit, to chastise the deadness, negligence, earthly-mindedness, and vanity, found among ministers in the late times of declension and deadness, wherein wise virgins and foolish, ministers and people, have sunk into a deep sleep. These things in ministers of the gospel, that go forth as the ambassadors of Christ, and have the care of immortal souls, are extremely abominable to God; vastly more hateful in his sight than all the imprudence and intemperate heats, wildness and distraction (as some call it) of these zealous preachers. A supine carelessness, and a vain, carnal, worldly spirit in a minister of the gospel, is the worst madness and distraction in the sight

of God. God may also make use at this day of the unchristian censoriousness of some preachers, the more to humble and purify some of his own children and true servants that have been wrongfully censured, to fit them for more eminent service and future honour.

SECT. II.

We should judge by the Rule of Scripture.

Another foundation-error of those who do not acknowledge the divinity of this work is, not taking the holy scriptures as whole, and in itself a sufficient rule to judge of such things by. They who have one certain consistent rule to judge by, are like to come to some clear determination; but they who have half a dozen different rules, instead of justly and clearly determining, do but perplex and darken themselves and others. They who would learn the true measure of any thing, and will have many different measures to try it by, have a task that they will not accomplish. Those of whom I am speaking will indeed make some use of scripture, so far as they think it serves their turn, but do not make use of it alone as a rule sufficient by itself, but make as much and a great deal more use of other things, diverse and wide from it, by which to judge of this work. For,

I. Some make Philosophy, instead of the holy scriptures, their rule of judging of this work; particularly the philosophical notions they entertain of the nature of the soul, its faculties and affections. Some are ready to say, "There is but little sober solid religion in this work; it is little else but flash and noise. Religion now all runs out into transports and high flights of the passions and affections." In their philosophy, the affections of the soul are something diverse from the will, and not appertaining to the noblest part of the soul. They are ranked among the meanest principles that belong to men as partaking of animal nature, and what he has in common with the brute creation, rather than any thing whereby he is conformed to angels and pure spirits. And though they acknowledge that a good use may be made of the affections in religion, yet they suppose that the substantial part of religion does not consist in them, but that they are something adventitious and accidental in Christianity.

But these gentlemen, I cannot but think, labour under great mistakes, both in their philosophy and divinity. It is true, distinction must be made in the affections or passions. There is a great deal of difference in high and raised affections.

which must be distinguished by the skill of the observer. Some are much more solid than others. There are many exercises of the affections that are very flashy, and little to be depended on; and oftentimes a great deal appertains to them, or rather is the effect of them, that has its seat in animal nature, and is very much owing to the constitution and frame of the body; and that which sometimes more especially obtains the name of passion, is nothing solid or substantial. But it is false philosophy to suppose this to be the case with all exercises of affection in the soul, or with all great and high affections; and false divinity to suppose that religious affections do not appertain to the substance and essence of Christianity. On the contrary, it seems to me that the very life and soul of all true religion consists in them.

I humbly conceive that the affections of the soul are not properly distinguished from the will, as though there were two faculties. All acts of the affections are in some sense acts of the will, and all the acts of the will are acts of the affections. All exercises of the will are, in some degree or other, exercises of the soul's appetition or aversion; or, which is the same thing, of its love or hatred. The soul wills one thing rather than another, or chooses one thing rather than another, no otherwise than as it loves one thing more than another; but love and hatred are affections of the soul. Therefore all acts of the will are truly acts of the affections; though the exercises of the will do not obtain the name of passions, unless the will, either in its aversion or opposition, be exercised in a high degree, or in a vigorous and lively manner. All will allow that true virtue or holiness has its seat chiefly in the heart, rather than in the head. It therefore follows from what has been said already, that it consists chiefly in holy affections. The things of religion take place in men's hearts, no further than they are affected with them. The informing of the understanding is all vain, any farther than it affects the heart, or, which is the same thing, has influence on the affections.

Those gentlemen who make light of these raised affections in religion, will doubtless allow that true religion and holiness, as it has its seat in the heart, is capable of very high degrees, and high exercises in the soul. For instance; they will probably allow that the holiness of the heart or will is capable of being raised to a hundred times as great a degree of strength as it is in the most eminent saint on earth, or to be exerted in a hundred times so vigorous exercises of the heart; and yet be true religion or holiness still. Now therefore I will ask them, by what name they will call these high and vigorous exercises of the will or heart? Are they not high affections? What can they consist in, but in high acts of love; strong and vigorous exercises of benevolence and complacence; high, exalting, and admiring thoughts of God and his perfections;

strong desires after God, &c.? And now, what are we come to but high and raised affections? yea, those very affections that before they objected against, as worthy of little regard?

All will allow that there is nothing but solid religion in heaven; but there, holiness is raised to an exceeding great height, to strong, high, exalted exercises of heart. Now, what other strong and high exercises of the heart, or of holiness as it has its seat in their hearts, can we devise for them, but holy affections, high degrees of actings of love to God, rejoicing in God, admiration of God, &c.? Therefore these things in the saints and angels in heaven are not to be despised and cashiered by the name of great heats and transports of the passions. And it will doubtless be yet further allowed, that the more eminent the saints are on earth, the stronger their grace, and the higher its exercises are, the more they are like the saints in heaven, i. e. (by what has been just now observed) the more they have of high or raised affections in religion.

Though there are false affections in religion, and in some respects raised high; yet undoubtedly there are also true, holy and solid affections; and the higher these are raised the better. And when they are raised to an exceeding great height, they are not to be suspected merely because of their degree, but on the contrary to be esteemed. Charity, or divine love, is in scripture represented as the sum of all the religion of the heart; but this is only a holy affection. And therefore, in proportion as this is firmly fixed in the soul, and raised to a great height, the more eminent a person is in holiness. Divine love or charity is represented as the sum of all the religion of heaven, and that wherein mainly the religion of the church in its more perfect state on earth shall consist, when knowledge, and tongues, and prophesyings shall cease; and therefore the higher this holy affection is raised in the church of God, or in a gracious soul, the more excellent and perfect is the state of the church, or a particular soul.

If we take the scriptures for our rule, then the greater and higher our exercises of love to God, delight and complacency in him, desires and longings after him, delight in his children, love to mankind, brokenness of heart, abhorrence of sin, and self-abhorrence for it; the more we have of the peace of God which passeth all understanding, and joy in the Holy Ghost, unspeakable and full of glory: the higher our admiring thoughts of God, exulting and glorying in him; so much the higher is Christ's religion, or that virtue which he and his apostles taught, raised in the soul.

It is a stumbling to some, that religious affections should seem to be so powerful, or that they should be so violent (as they express it) in some persons. They are therefore ready to doubt whether it can be the Spirit of God; or whether this

vehemence be not rather a sign of the operation of an evil spirit. But why should such a doubt arise? What is represented in scripture as more powerful in its effects than the Spirit of God? which is therefore called "the power of the Highest," Luke i. 35. and its saving effect in the soul is called "the power of godliness." So we read of the "demonstration of the Spirit and of power," 1 Cor. ii. 4. And it is said to operate in the minds of men with the "exceeding greatness of divine power," and "according to the working of God's mighty power," Eph. i. 19. So we read of "the effectual working of his power," Eph. iii. 7. "the power that worketh in Christians, v. 20. the "glorious power" of God in the operations of the Spirit, Col. i. 11. and "the work of faith," wrought "with power," 2 Thess. i. 11. In 2 Tim. i. 7. the Spirit of God is called "the spirit of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." So the Spirit is represented by a mighty wind, and by fire, things most powerful in their operation.

II. Many are guilty of not taking the holy scriptures as a sufficient and whole rule, whereby to judge of this work.—They judge by those things which the scripture does not give as any signs or marks whereby to judge one way or the other, viz. the effects that religious exercises and affections of mind have upon the body. Scripture rules respect the state of the mind, moral conduct, and voluntary behaviour; and not the physical state of the body. The design of the scripture is to teach us divinity, and not physic and anatomy. Ministers are made the watchmen of men's souls, and not their bodies; and therefore the great rule which God has committed into their hands, is to make them divines, and not physicians.—Christ knew what instructions and rules his church would stand in need of, better than we do: and, if he had seen it needful in order to the church's safety, he doubtless would have given to ministers rules for judging of bodily effects.—He would have told them how the pulse should beat under such and such religious exercises of mind; when men should look pale, and when they should shed tears; when they should tremble, and whether or no they should ever be faint or cry out; or whether the body should ever be put into convulsions. He probably would have put some book into their hands, that should have tended to make them excellent anatomists and physicians. But he has not done it, because he did not see it to be needful.—He judged, that if ministers thoroughly did their duty as watchmen and overseers of the state and frame of men's souls, and of their voluntary conduct, according to the rules he had given, his church would be well provided for as to its safety in these matters. And therefore those ministers of Christ, and overseers of souls, who

are full of concern about the involuntary motions of the fluids and solids of men's bodies, and who from thence are full of doubts and suspicions of the cause—when nothing appears but that the state and frame of their minds and their voluntary behaviour is good, and agreeable to God's word—go out of the place that Christ has set them in, and leave their proper business, as much as if they should undertake to tell who are under the influence of the Spirit by their looks or their gait. I cannot see which way we are in danger, or how the devil is like to get any notable advantage against us, if we do but thoroughly do our duty with respect to those two things, viz. the state of persons' *minds*, and their moral *conduct;* seeing to it that they be maintained in an agreeableness to the rules that Christ has given us. If things are but kept right in these respects, our fears and suspicions arising from extraordinary bodily effects seem wholly groundless.

The most specious thing alleged against these extraordinary effects on the body, is, That the body is impaired, and that it is hard to think that God, in the merciful influences of his Spirit on men, would wound their bodies and impair their health. But if it were in multiplied instances (which I do not suppose it is) that persons received a lasting wound to their health by extraordinary religious impressions made upon their minds, yet it is too much for us to determine that God shall never bring an outward calamity, in bestowing a vastly greater spiritual and eternal good. Jacob in doing his duty in wrestling with God for the blessing, and even at the same time that he received the blessing from God, suffered a great outward calamity from his hand. God gave him the blessing, but sent him away halting on his thigh, and he went lame all his life after. And yet this is not mentioned as if it were any diminution of the great mercy of God to him, when God blessed him and he received his name Israel, because as a prince he had power with God, and had prevailed.

But, say some, The operations of the Spirit of God are of a benign nature; nothing is of a more kind influence on human nature than the merciful breathings of God's own Spirit. But it has been generally supposed and allowed in the church of God, till now, that there is such a thing as being sick of love to Christ, or having the bodily strength weakened by strong and vigorous exercises of love to him. And however kind to human nature the influences of the Spirit of God are, yet nobody doubts but that divine and eternal things, as they may be discovered, would overpower the nature of man in its present weak state; and that therefore the body, in its present weakness, is not fitted

for the views and pleasures, and employments of heaven. Were God to discover but a little of that which is seen by saints and angels in heaven, our frail natures would sink under it. Let us rationally consider what we profess to believe of the infinite greatness of divine wrath, divine glory, the divine infinite love and grace in Jesus Christ, and the infinite importance of eternal things; and then how reasonable it is to suppose, that if God a little withdraw the veil, to let light into the soul—and give a view of the great things of another world in their transcendent and infinite greatness—that human nature, which is as the grass, a shaking leaf, a weak withering flower, should totter under such a discovery? Such a bubble is too weak to bear a weight so vast. Alas! what is man that he should support himself under a view of the awful wrath or infinite glory and love of JEHOVAH! No wonder therefore that it is said, "No man can see me and live;" and, "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." That external glory and majesty of Christ which Daniel saw, when "there remained no strength in him, and his comeliness was turned in him into corruption," Dan. x. 6—8, and which the apostle John saw, when he fell at his feet as dead; was but a shadow of that spiritual majesty of Christ which will be manifested in the souls of the saints in another world, and which is sometimes, in a degree, manifested to the soul in this world. And if beholding the image of this glory did so overpower human nature, is it unreasonable to suppose that a sight of the spiritual glory itself should have as powerful an effect? The prophet Habakkuk, speaking of the awful manifestations God made of his majesty and wrath, at the Red Sea, and in the wilderness, and at mount Sinai, where he gave the law; and of the merciful influence, and strong impression God caused it to have upon him, to the end that he might be saved from that wrath, and rest in the day of trouble; says, Hab. iii. 16. "When I heard, my belly trembled, my lips quivered at the voice, rottenness entered into my bones, I trembled in myself, that I might rest in the day of trouble." This is an effect similar to what the discovery of the same majesty and wrath has had upon many in these days; and to the same purposes, viz. to give them rest in the day of trouble, and save them from that wrath. The Psalmist also speaks of such an effect as I have often seen on persons under religious affections of late, Psal. cxix. 131.

God is pleased sometimes, in dealing forth spiritual blessings to his people, in some respects to exceed the capacity of the vessel in its present scantiness; so that he not only fills it, but makes their cup to run over; (Psal. xxiii. 5.) and pours out a blessing, sometimes in such a manner and measure that there is not room enough to receive it. (Mal. iii. 10.) He

gives them riches more than they can carry away; as he did to Jehoshaphat and his people in a time of great favour, by the word of his prophet Jahaziel in answer to earnest prayer, when the people blessed the Lord in the valley of Berachah, 2 Chron. xx. 25, 26. It has been with the disciples of Christ, for a long season, a time of great emptiness on spiritual accounts. They have gone hungry, and have been toiling in vain, during a dark night with the church of God; as it was with the disciples of old, when they had toiled all night for something to eat, and caught nothing, Luke v. 5, and John xxi. 3. But now, the morning being come, Jesus appears to his disciples, and takes a compassionate notice of their wants, and says to them, "Children, have ye any meat?" and gives some of them such abundance of food, that they are not able to draw their net; yea, so that their net breaks, and their vessel is overloaded, and begins to sink; as it was with the disciples of old, Luke v. 6, 7. and John xxi. 6.

We cannot determine that God never shall give any person so much of a discovery of himself, not only as to weaken their bodies, but to take away their lives. It is supposed by very learned and judicious divines, that Moses's life was taken away after this manner; and this has also been supposed to be the case with some other saints. Yea, I do not see any solid sure grounds any have to determine, that God shall never make such strong impressions on the mind by his Spirit, that shall be an occasion of so impairing the frame of the body, that persons shall be deprived of the use of reason. As I said before, it is too much for us to determine, that God will not bring an outward calamity in bestowing spiritual and eternal blessings; so it is too much for us to determine how great an outward calamity he will bring. If God gives a great increase of discoveries of himself, and of love to him, the benefit is infinitely greater than the calamity, though the life should presently after be taken away; yea, though the soul should lie for years in a deep sleep, and then be taken to heaven; or, which is much the same thing, if it be deprived of the use of its faculties, and be as inactive and unserviceable, as if it lay in a deep sleep for some years, and then should pass into glory. We cannot determine how great a calamity distraction is, considered with all its consequences; and all that might have been consequent if the distraction had not happened; nor indeed whether, thus considered, it be any calamity at all, or whether it be not a mercy, by preventing some great sin, &c. It is a great fault in us to limit a sovereign all-wise God, whose judgments are a great deep, and his ways past finding out, where he has not limited himself, and in things concerning which he has not told us what his way shall be. It is remarkable, considering in what multitudes of instances, and to how

great a degree, the frame of the body has been overpowered of late, that persons' lives have notwithstanding been preserved. The instances of those who have been deprived of reason, have been very few, and those, perhaps all of them, persons under the peculiar disadvantage of a weak, vaporous habit of body. A merciful and careful divine hand is very manifest in it, that the ship, though in so many instances it has begun to sink, yet has been upheld, and has not totally sunk. The instances of such as have been deprived of reason are so few, that certainly there are not enough to cause alarm, as though this work was like to be of baneful influence; unless we are disposed to gather up all that we can to darken it, and set it forth in frightful colours.

There is one particular kind of exercise by which many have been overpowered, that has been especially stumbling to some; and that is, their deep distress for the souls of others. I am sorry that any put us to the trouble of defending such a thing as this. It seems like mere trifling in so plain a case, to enter into a particular debate, in order to determine whether there be any thing in the greatness and importance in the case that will bear a proportion to the greatness of the concern manifested. Men may be allowed, from no higher a principle than common humanity, to be very deeply concerned, and greatly exercised in mind, at seeing others in great danger of, or being burnt up in a house on fire. And it will be allowed to be equally reasonable, if they saw them in danger of a calamity ten times greater, to be still much more concerned; and so much more still, if the calamity was still vastly greater. Why then should it be thought unreasonable, and looked on with a suspicious eye, as if it must come from some bad cause, when persons are extremely concerned at seeing others in a very great danger of suffering the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God to all eternity? Besides, it will doubtless be allowed that those who have great degrees of the Spirit of God, which is a spirit of love, may well be supposed to have vastly more love and compassion to their fellow-creatures, than those who are influenced only by common humanity. Why should it be thought strange that those who are full of the Spirit of Christ, should be proportionably, in their love to souls, like to Christ? He had so strong a love and concern for them, as to be willing to drink the dregs of the cup of God's fury; and, at the same time that he offered up his blood for souls, he offered up also, as their high priest, strong crying and tears, with an extreme agony, wherein the soul of Christ was as it were in travail for the souls of the elect: and therefore, in saving them, he is said to see of the travail of his soul. As such a spirit of love and concern for souls was the spirit of Christ, so it is that of the church. Therefore the church, in

desiring and seeking that Christ might be brought forth in the souls of men, is represented, Rev. xii. as "a woman crying, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered." The spirit of those who have been in distress for the souls of others, so far as I can discern, seems not to be different from that of the apostle, who travailed for souls, and was ready to "wish himself accursed from Christ," for others; and that of the Psalmist, Psal. cxix. 53. "Horror hath taken hold upon me, because of the wicked that forsake thy law." And ver. 136. "Rivers of water run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy law." And that of the prophet Jeremiah. Jer. iv. 19. "My bowels! my bowels! I am pained at my very heart! my heart maketh a noise in me! I cannot hold my peace! because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war!" And so chap. ix. 1. and xiii. 17. xiv. 17. and Isai. xvii. 4. We read of Mordecai, when he saw his people in danger of being destroyed with a temporal destruction, Esth iv. 1. that "he rent his clothes, and put on sackcloth with ashes, and went out in the midst of the city, and cried with a loud and bitter cry." And why then should persons be thought to be distracted, when they cannot forbear crying out, at the consideration of the misery of those who are going to eternal destruction.

III. Another thing that some make their rule to judge of this work by, instead of the holy scriptures, is *history*, or former observation. Herein they err two ways:

First, If there be any thing extraordinary in the circumstances of this work, which was not observed in former times, theirs is a rule to reject this work which God has not given them, and they limit God, where he has not limited himself. And this is especially unreasonable in this case: For whosoever has well weighed the wonderful and mysterious methods of divine wisdom in carrying on the work of the new creation—or in the progress of the work of redemption, from the first promise of the seed of the woman to this time—may easily observe that it has all along been God's manner to open new scenes, and to bring forth to view things new and wonderful—such as eye had not seen, nor ear heard, nor entered into the heart of man or angels—to the astonishment of heaven and earth, not only in the revelations he makes of his mind and will, but also into the works of his hands. As the old creation was carried on through six days, and appeared all complete, settled in a state of rest on the seventh; so the new creation, which is immensely the greatest and most glorious work, is carried on in a gradual progress, from the fall of man to the consummation of all things. And as in the progress of the old creation, there were still new things accomplished; new wonders every day in the sight of the angels, the spectators of that

work—while those morning-stars sang together, new scenes were opened, till the whole was finished—so it is in the progress of the new creation. So that, that promise, Isa. lxiv. 4. "For since the beginning of the world, men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him;" though it had a glorious fulfilment in the days of Christ and his apostles, as the words are applied, 1 Cor. ii. 9. yet it always remains to be fulfilled, in things that are yet behind, till the new creation is finished, as Christ's delivering up the kingdom to the Father. And we live in those latter days, wherein we may be especially warranted to expect that things will be accomplished, concerning which it will be said, "Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things?"

Besides, those things in this work, which have been chiefly complained of as new, are not so new as has been generally imagined. Though they have been much more frequent lately, in proportion to the uncommon degree, extent, and swiftness, and other extraordinary circumstances of the work, yet they are not new in their kind; but are of the same nature as have been found, and well approved of, in the church of God before, from time to time. We have a remarkable instance in Mr. Bolton, that noted minister of the church of England, who after being awakened by the preaching of the famous Mr. Perkins, minister of Christ in the university of Cambridge, was the subject of such terrors as threw him to the ground, and caused him to roar with anguish. The pangs of the new birth in him were such, that he lay pale and without sense, like one dead; as we have an account in the Fulfilment of the Scripture, the 5th edition, p. 103, 104. We have an account in the same page of another, whose comforts under the sun-shine of God's presence were so great that he could not forbear crying out in a transport, and expressing in exclamations, the great sense he had of forgiving mercy and his assurance of God's love. And we have a remarkable instance, in the life of Mr. George Trosse written by himself, (who, of a notoriously vicious profligate liver, became an eminent saint and minister of the gospel,) of terrors occasioned by awakenings of conscience, so overpowering the body, as to deprive him, for some time, of the use of reason.

Yea, such extraordinary external effects of inward impressions have not been found merely in here and there a single person, but there have been times wherein many have been thus affected, in some particular parts of the church of God; and such effects have appeared in congregations, in many at once. So it was in the year 1625, in the west of Scotland, on a time of great out-pouring of the Spirit of God. It

was then a frequent thing for many to be so extraordinarily seized with terror in hearing the word, by the Spirit of God convincing them of sin, that they fell down and were carried out of the church, and they afterwards proved most solid and lively Christians; as the author of the Fulfilling of the Scripture informs us, p. 185. The same author in the preceding page informs us of many in France that were so wonderfully affected with the preaching of the gospel, in the time of those famous divines Farel and Viret, that for a time they could not follow their secular business: And, p. 186, of many in Ireland, in a time of great out-pouring of the Spirit there, in the year 1628, that were so filled with divine comforts, and a sense of God, that they made but little use of either meat, drink or sleep; and professed that they did not feel the need thereof. The same author gives a similar account of Mrs. Katharine Brettergh, of Lancashire, in England: (p. 391, 392.) After great distress, which very much affected her body, God did so break in upon her mind with light and discoveries of himself, that she was forced to burst out crying, "O the joys, the joys, the joys that I feel in my soul! O they be wonderful, they be wonderful! The place where I now am is sweet and pleasant! How comfortable is the sweetness I feel, that delights my soul! The taste is precious; do you not feel it? Oh, so sweet as it is!" And at other times, "O my sweet Saviour, shall I be one with thee, as thou art one with the Father? And dost thou so love me that am but dust, to make me partaker of glory with Christ? O how wonderful is thy love! And oh that my tongue and heart were able to sound forth thy praises as I ought!" At another time she burst forth thus: "Yea, Lord, I feel thy mercy, and I am assured of thy love! And so certain am I thereof, as thou art that God of truth, even so certainly do I know myself to be thine, O Lord my God; and this my soul knoweth right well!" Which last words she again doubled. To a grave minister, one Mr. Harrison, then with her, she said, "My soul hath been compassed with the terrors of death, the sorrows of hell were upon me, and a wilderness of woe was in me; but blessed, blessed, blessed be the Lord my God! he hath brought me to a place of rest, even to the sweet running waters of life. The way I now go in is a sweet and easy way, strewed with flowers; he hath brought me into a place more sweet than the garden of Eden; O the joy, the joy, the delights and joy that I feel! O how wonderful!"

Great outcries under awakenings were more frequently heard of in former times in the country than they have been of late, as some aged persons now living do testify: particularly I think fit here to insert a testimony of my honoured father, of what he remembers formerly to have heard—

"I well remember that one Mr. Alexander Allen, a Scots gentleman of good credit, that dwelt formerly in this town, shewed me a letter that came from Scotland, that gave an account of a sermon preached in the city of Edinburgh (as I remember) in the time of the sitting of the general assembly of divines in that kingdom, that so affected the people, that there was a great and loud cry made throughout the assembly. I have also been credibly informed, and how often I cannot now say, that it was a common thing, when the famous Mr. John Rogers of Dedham, in England, was preaching, for some of his hearers to cry out: and, by what I have heard, I conclude that it was usual for many that heard that very awakening and rousing preacher of God's word, to make a great cry in the congregation.

(Signed) "Timothy Edwards."

"Windsor, May 5, 1742."

Mr. Flavel gives a remarkable instance of a man whom he knew, that was wonderfully overcome with divine comforts; which it is supposed he knew, as the apostle Paul knew the man that was caught up to the third heaven. He relates, that "As the person was travelling alone, with his thoughts closely fixed on the great and astonishing things of another world, his thoughts began to swell higher and higher, like the water in Ezekiel's vision, till at last they became an overflowing flood. Such was the intenseness of his mind, such the ravishing tastes of heavenly joys, and such his full assurance of his interest therein, that he utterly lost all sight and sense of this world, and the concernments thereof; and for some hours knew not where he was, nor what he was about; but having lost a great quantity of blood at the nose, he found himself so faint, that it brought him a little more to himself. And after he had washed himself at a spring, and drank of the water for his refreshment, he continued to the end of his journey, which was thirty miles; and all this while was scarce sensible: and says, he had several trances of considerable continuance. The same blessed frame was preserved all that night, and, in a lower degree, great part of the next day. The night passed without one wink of sleep; and yet he declares he never had a sweeter night's rest in all his life. Still, "adds the story," the joy of the Lord overflowed him, and he seemed to be an inhabitant of another world. And he used for many years after to call that day one of the days of heaven; and professed that he understood more of the life of heaven by it than by all the books he ever read, or discourses he ever entertained about it."

There have been instances before now, of persons crying out in transports of divine joy in New England. We have an

instance in Capt. Clap's memoirs, (published by the Rev. Mr. Prince,) not of a silly woman or child, but a man of solid understanding, that, in a high transport of spiritual joy, was made to cry out aloud on his bed. His words, p. 9. are, "God's holy Spirit did witness (I do believe) together with my spirit, that I was a child of God; and did fill my heart and soul with such full assurance that Christ was mine, that it did so transport me, as to make me cry out upon my bed, with a loud voice, He is come, he is come!"

There has, before now, been both crying out and falling, even in this town, under awakenings of conscience, and in the pangs of the new birth; and also in one of the neighbouring towns, more than seven years ago, a great number together cried out and fell down under conviction; and in most of whom there was an abiding good issue. And the Rev. Mr. Williams of Deerfield gave me an account of an aged man in that town, many years before that, who being awakened by his preaching, cried out aloud in the congregation. There have been many instances before now, of persons in this town fainting with joyful discoveries made to their souls, and once several together. And there have been several instances here of persons waxing cold and benumbed with their hands clinched, yea, and their bodies in convulsions, being overpowered with a strong sense of the astonishingly great and excellent things of God and the eternal world.

Secondly, Another way that some err in making history and former observation their rule instead of the holy scripture, is in comparing some external, accidental circumstances of this work, with what has appeared sometimes in enthusiasts. They find an agreement in some such things, and so they reject the whole work, or at least the substance of it, concluding it to be enthusiasm. Great use has been made to this pupose of many things that are found amongst the Quakers; however totally and essentially different in its nature this work is, and the principles upon which it is built, from the whole religion of the Quakers. To the same purpose, some external appearances that were found amongst the French prophets, and other enthusiasts in former times, have been of late trumped up with gteat asssurance and triumph.

IV. I wold propose it to be considered, whether or no some, instead of making the scriptures their only rule to judge of this work, do not make their own experience the rule, and reject such and such things as are now professed and experienced, because they themselves never felt them. Are there not many, who, chiefly on this ground, have entertained and vented suspicions, if not peremptory condemnations, of those extreme terrors, and those great, sudden, and extraordinary

discoveries of the glorious perfections of God, and of the beauty and love of Christ? Have they not condemned such vehement affections, such high transports of love and joy, such pity and distress for the souls of others, and exercises of mind that have such great effects, merely, or chiefly, because they knew nothing about them by experience? Persons are very ready to be suspicious of what they have not felt themselves. It is to be feared that many good men have been guilty of this error: which however does not make it the less unreasonable. And perhaps there are some who upon this ground do not only reject these extraordinary things, but all such conviction of sin, discoveries of the glory of God, excellency of Christ, and inward conviction of the truth of the gospel, by the immediate influence of the Spirit of God, now supposed to be necessary to salvation.—These persons who thus make their own experiences their rule of judgment, instead of bowing to the wisdom of God, and yielding to his word as an infallible rule, are guilty of casting a great reflection upon the understanding of the Most High.

SECT. III.

We should distinguish the Good from the Bad, and not judge of the Whole by a Part.

Another foundation error of those who reject this work, is, their not duly distinguishing the good from the bad, and very unjustly judging of the whole by a part; and so rejecting the work in general, or in the main substance of it, for the sake of some accidental evil in it. They look for more in men, because subject to the operations of a good spirit, than is justly to be expected from them for that reason, in this imperfect state, where so much blindness and corruption remains in the best. When any profess to have received light and comforts from heaven, and to have had sensible communion with God, many are ready to expect that now they appear like angels, and not still like poor, feeble, blind, and sinful worms of the dust. There being so much corruption left in the hearts of God's own children, and its prevailing, as it sometimes does, is indeed a mysterious thing, and always was a stumbling-block to the world; but will not be so much wondered at by those who are well versed in, and duly mindful of, two things, viz. First, The word of God, which teaches the state of true Christians in this world: and Secondly, their own hearts, at least if they have any grace, and have experience of its conflicts with corruption. True saints are the most inexcusable,

in making a great difficulty of much blindness and many sinful errors in those who profess godliness. If all our conduct, both open and secret, should be known, and our hearts laid open to the world; how should we be even ready to flee from the light of the sun, and hide ourselves from the view of mankind! And what great allowances would we need that others should make for us? Perhaps much greater than we are willing to make for others.

The great weakness of the greater part of mankind, in any affair that is new and uncommon, appears in not distinguishing, but either approving or condemning all in the lump. They who highly approve of the affair in general, cannot bear to have any thing at all found fault with; and, on the other hand, those who fasten their eyes upon some things in the affair that are amiss, and appear very disagreeable to them, at once reject the whole. Both which errors oftentimes arise from the want of persons having a due acquaintance with themselves. It is rash and unjust when we proceed thus in judging either of a particular person, or a people. Many if they see any thing very ill in a particular person, a minister or private professor, will at once brand him as a hypocrite. And, if there be two or three of a people or society that behave themselves very irregularly, the whole must bear the blame of it. And if there be a few, though it may not be above one in a hundred, that professed, and had a shew of being the happy partakers of what are called the saving benefits of this work, but afterwards give the world just grounds to suspect them, the whole work must be rejected on this account; and those in general, that make the like profession, must be condemned for their sakes.

So careful are some persons lest this work should be defended, that now they will hardly allow that the influences of the Spirit of God on the heart can so much as indirectly, and accidentally, be the occasion of the exercise of corruption, and the commission of sin. Thus far is true, that the influence of the Spirit of God in his saving operations will not be an occasion of increasing the corruption of the heart in general; but on the contrary of weakening it: but yet there is nothing unreasonable in supposing, that, at the same time that it weakens corruption in general, it may be an occasion of turning what is left into a new channel. There may be more of some kinds of the exercise of corruption than before; as that which tends to stop the course of a stream, if it do it not wholly, may give a new course to so much of the water as gets by the obstacle. The influences of the Spirit, for instance, may be an occasion of new ways of the exercise of pride, as has been acknowledged by orthodox divines in general. That spiritual discoveries and comforts may, through the corruption of the heart, be an occa-

sion of the exercise of spiritual pride, was not used to be doubted, till now it is found to be needful to maintain the war against this work.

They who will hardly allow that a work of the Spirit of God can be a remote occasion of any sinful behaviour or unchristian conduct, I suppose will allow that the truly gracious influences of the Spirit of God, yea, and a high degree of love to God, is consistent with these two things, viz. a considerable degree of remaining corruption, and also many errors in judgment in matters of religion. And this is all that need to be allowed, in order to its being most demonstratively evident, that a high degree of love to God may *accidentally* move a person to that which is very contrary to the mind and will of God. For a high degree of love to God will strongly move a person to do that which he believes to be agreeable to God's will; and therefore, if he be mistaken, and be persuaded that that is agreeable to the will of God, which indeed is very contrary to it, then his love will accidentally, but strongly, incline him to that which is indeed very contrary to the will of God.—They who are studied in logic have learned that the nature of the cause is not to be judged by the nature of the effect, nor the nature of the effect from the nature of the cause, when the cause is only *causa sine qua non*, or an occasional cause; yea, that in such a case, oftentimes the nature of the effect is quite contrary to the nature of the cause.

True disciples of Christ may have a great deal of false zeal, such as the disciples had of old, when they would have fire called for from heaven to come down on the Samaritans, because they did not receive them. And even so eminently holy and great and divine a saint as Moses—who conversed with God as a man speaks with his friend, and concerning whom God gives his testimony, that he *was very meek above any man upon the face of the earth*—may be rash and sinful in his zeal, when his spirit is stirred by the hard-heartedness and opposition of others. He may speak very unadvisedly with his lips, and greatly offend God, and shut himself out from the possession of the good things that God is about to accomplish for his church on earth; as Moses was excluded Canaan, though he had brought the people out of Egypt, Psalm cvi. 32, 33. And men, even in those very things wherein they are influenced by a truly pious principle, may through error and want of due consideration and caution, be very rash with their zeal. It was a truly good spirit which animated that excellent generation of Israel in Joshua's time; (Josh. xxii.) and yet they were rash and heady with their zeal, to gather all Israel together to go so furiously to war with their brethren of the two tribes and half, about their building the altar Ed, without first inquiring into the matter, or so much as sending a mes-

senger to be informed. So the Christians of the circumcision, with warmth and contention, condemned Peter for receiving Cornelius, Acts xi. This their heat and censure was unjust, and Peter was wronged in it; but there is every appearance in the story, that they acted from a real zeal and concern for the will and honour of God. So the primitive Christians, from their zeal for and against unclean meats, censured and condemned one another. This was a bad effect, and yet the apostle bears them witness, or at least expresses his charity towards them, that both sides acted from a good principle, and true respect to the Lord, Rom. xiv. 6. The zeal of the Corinthians with respect to the incestuous man, though the apostle highly commends it, yet he at the same time saw they needed a caution, lest they should carry it too far, to an undue severity, so as to fail of Christian meekness and forgiveness, 2 Cor. ii. 6—11. and chapter vii. 11, to the end. Luther, that great reformer, had a great deal of bitterness with his zeal.

It surely cannot be wondered at by considerate persons, when multitudes all over the land have their affections greatly moved, that great numbers should run into many errors and mistakes with respect to their duty, and consequently, into many practices that are imprudent and irregular. I question whether there be a man in New England, of the strongest reason and greatest learning, but what would be put to it to keep master of himself, thoroughly to weigh his words, and to consider all the consequences of his behaviour, so as to conduct himself in all respects prudently, if he were so strongly impressed with a sense of divine and eternal things, and his affections so exceedingly moved, as has been frequent of late among the common people. How little do they consider human nature, who look upon it so insuperable a stumbling block, when such multitudes of all kinds of capacities, natural tempers, educations, customs and manners of life, are so greatly and variously affected, that imprudences and irregularities of conduct should abound! especially in a state of things so uncommon, and when the degree, extent, swiftness, and power of the operation is so extraordinary, and so new, that there has not been time and experience enough to give birth to rules to people's conduct, and the writings of divines do not afford rules to direct us in such a state of things?

A great deal of noise and tumult, confusion and uproar, darkness mixed with light, and evil with good, is always to be expected in the beginning of something very glorious in the state of things in human society, or the church of God. After nature has long been shut up in a cold dead state, when the sun returns in the spring, there is, together with the increase of the light and heat of the sun, very tempestuous weather, before

all is settled calm and serene, and all nature rejoices in its bloom and beauty. It is in the new creation as it was in the old: the Spirit of God first moved upon the face of the waters, which was an occasion of great uproar and tumult. Things were then gradually brought to a settled state, till at length all stood forth in that beautiful peaceful order, when the heavens and the earth were finished, and God saw every thing that he had made, and behold it was very good. When God is about to bring to pass something great and glorious in the world, nature is in a ferment and struggle, and the world as it were in travail. When God was about to introduce the Messiah into the world, and a new, glorious dispensation, he *shook the heavens and the earth*, and he *shook all nations*. There is nothing that the church of God is in scripture more frequently represented by than vegetables; as a tree, a vine, corn, &c. which gradually bring forth their fruits, and are first green before they are ripe. A great revival of religion is expressly compared to this gradual production of vegetables, Isa. lxi. 11. "As the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations." The Church is in a special manner compared to a palm-tree, (Cant. vii. 7, 8. Exod. xv. 27. 1 Kings vi. 29. Psal. xcii. 12.) of which it is observed, That the fruit of it, though very sweet and good when ripe, has, while unripe, a mixture of poison.

The weakness of human nature has always appeared in times of great revival of religion, by a disposition to run to extremes, and get into confusion; and especially in these three things, enthusiasm, superstition, and intemperate zeal. So it appeared in the time of the reformation very remarkably, and even in the days of the apostles. Many were exceedingly disposed to lay weight on those things that were very chimerical, giving heed to fables, (1 Tim. i. 4. and iv. 7. 2 Tim. ii. 16. and ver. 23. and Tit. i. 14. and iii. 9.) Many, as ecclesiastical history informs us, fell off into the most wild enthusiasm, and extravagant notions of spirituality, and extraordinary illumination from heaven beyond others; and many were prone to superstition, will-worship and a voluntary humility, giving heed to the commandments of men, being fond of an unprofitable bodily exercise, as appears by many passages in the apostles' writings. And what a proneness then appeared among professors to swerve from the path of duty, and the spirit of the gospel, in the exercise of a rash indiscreet zeal, censuring and condemning ministers and people: one saying, I am of Paul; another, I am of Apollos; another, I am of Cephas.—They judged one another for differences of opinion about smaller matters, unclean meats, holy days and holy

places, and their different opinions and practices respecting civil intercourse and communication with their heathen neighbours. And how much did vain jangling, disputing and confusion prevail, through undue heat of spirit, under the name of a religious zeal? (1 Tim. vi. 4, 5. 2 Tim. ii. 16. and Tit. iii. 9.) and what a task had the apostle to keep them within bounds, and maintain good order in the churches? How often do they mention their irregularities? The prevailing of such like disorders seems to have been the special occasion of writing many of their epistles. The church in that great effusion of the spirit, and under strong impressions, had the care of infallible guides, that watched over them day and night; but yet, so prone were they, through the weakness and corruption of human nature, to get out of the way, that irregularity and confusion arose in some churches, where there was an extraordinary outpouring of the Spirit, to a very great height, even in the apostles' life-time, and under their eye. And though some of the apostles lived long to settle the state of things, yet, presently after their death, the christian church ran into many superstitions and childish notions and practices, and in some respects into a great severity in their zeal. And let any wise person, that has not in the midst of the disputes of the present day got beyond the calmness of consideration, impartially consider to what lengths we may reasonably suppose many of the primitive christians, in their heat of zeal, and under their extraordinary impressions, would soon have gone if they had not had inspired guides. Is it not probable, that the church of Corinth in particular, by an increase of their irregularities and contentions, would in a little time have been broken to pieces, and dissolved in a state of the utmost confusion? And yet this would have been no evidence that there had not been a most glorious and remarkable outpouring of the Spirit in that city. But as for us, we have no infallible apostle to guide and direct us, to rectify disorders, and reclaim us when we are wandering; but every one does what is right in his own eyes; and they that err in judgment, and are got into a wrong path, continue to wander, till experience of the mischievous issue convinces them of their error.

If we look over this affair, and seriously weigh it in its circumstances, it will appear a matter of no great difficulty to account for the errors that have been gone into, supposing the work in general to be from a very great outpouring of the Spirit of God. It may easily be accounted for, that many have run into just such errors as they have. It is known, that some who have been great instruments to promote this work were very young. They were newly awaked out of sleep, and brought out of that state of darkness, insensibility, and spiritual death, in which they had been ever since they were

born. A new and wonderful scene opens to them; and they have in view the reality, the vastness, the infinite importance and nearness of spiritual and eternal things; and at the same time are surprised to see the world asleep about them. They have not the advantage of age and experience, and have had but little opportunity to study divinity, or to converse with aged experienced Christians and divines. How natural is it then for such to fall into many errors with respect to the state of mankind, with which they are so surprised, and with respect to the means and methods of their relief? Is it any wonder, that they have not at once learned how to make allowances, and that they do not at once find out that method of dealing with the world, which is adapted to the mysterious state and nature of mankind? Is it any wonder that they cannot at once foresee the consequences of things, what evils are to be guarded against, and what difficulties are like to arise?

We have been long in a strange stupor; the influences of the Spirit of God upon the heart have been but little felt, and the nature of them but little taught; so that they are in many respects new to great numbers of those who have lately fallen under them. And is it any wonder that they who never before had experience of the supernatural influence of the divine Spirit upon their souls, and never were instructed in the nature of these influences, do not so well know how to distinguish one extraordinary new impression from another, and so (to themselves insensibly) run into enthusiasm, taking every strong impulse or impression to be divine? How natural is it to suppose, that among the multitudes of illiterate people who find themselves so wonderfully changed, and brought into such new circumstances, many should pass wrong and very strange judgments of both persons and things about them?—Now they behold them in a new light, and in their surprise they go further from the judgment that they were wont to make of them than they ought, and, in their great change of sentiments, pass from one extreme to another. And why should it be thought strange, that those who scarce ever heard of any such thing as an outpouring of the Spirit of God before; or, if they did, had no notion of it; do not know how to behave themselves in such a new and strange state of things? And is it any wonder that they are ready to hearken to those who have instructed them, who have been the means of delivering them from such a state of death and misery as they were in before, or have a name for being the happy instruments of promoting the same work among others? Is it unaccountable that persons in these circumstances are ready to receive every thing they say, and to drink down error as well as truth from them? And why should there be all indignation, and no compassion, towards those who are thus misled?

These persons are extraordinarily affected with a new sense and recent discovery of the greatness and excellency of the Divine Being, the certainty and infinite importance of eternal things, the preciousness of souls, and the dreadful danger and madness of mankind, together with a great sense of God's distinguishing kindness and love to them. Is it any wonder that now they think they must exert themselves, and do something extraordinary for the honour of God and the good of souls? They know not how to sit still and forbear speaking and acting with uncommon earnestness and vigour. And in these circumstances, if they be not persons of more than common steadiness and discretion, or have not some person of wisdom to direct them, it is a wonder if they do not proceed without due caution, and do things that are irregular, and that will, in the issue, do much more hurt than good.

Censuring others is the worst disease with which this affair has been attended. But this is indeed a time of great temptation to this sinful error. When there has been a long-continued deadness, and many are brought out of a state of nature in so extraordinary a manner, and filled with such uncommon degrees of light, it is natural for such to form their notions of a state of grace wholly from what they experience. Many of them know no other way; for they never have been taught much about a state of grace, the different degrees of grace, and the degrees of darkness and corruption with which grace is compatible, nor concerning the manner of the influencs of the Spirit in converting a soul, and the variety of the manner of his operations. They therefore forming their idea of a state of grace only by their own experience, no wonder that it appears an insuperable difficulty to them to reconcile such a state, of which they have this idea, with what they observe in professors about them. It is indeed in itself a very great mystery, that grace should be compatible with so much and such kind of corruption as sometimes prevails in the truly godly; and no wonder that it especially appears so to uninstructed new converts, who have been converted in an extraordinary manner.

Though censoriousness is very sinful, and is most commonly found in hypocrites and persons of a pharisaical spirit, yet it is not so inconsistent with true godliness as some imagine. We have remarkable instances of it in those holy men of whom we have an account in the book of Job.—Not only were Job's three friends, who seem to have been eminently holy men, guilty of it, in very unreasonably censuring the best man on earth—very positively determining that he was an unconverted man—but Job himself, who was not only a man of true piety, but excelled all men in piety, and particularly excelled in an humble, meek, and patient

spirit, was guilty of bitterly censuring his three friends, as wicked, vile hypocrites, Job xvi. 9—11. "He teareth me in his wrath who hateth me, he gnasheth upon me with his teeth; mine enemy sharpeneth his eyes upon me: They have gaped upon me with their mouth.—God hath delivered me to the ungodly, and turned me over into the hands of the wicked."—He is very positive that they are hypocrites, and shall be miserably destroyed as such, Job. xvii. 2—4. "Are there not mockers with me? and doth not mine eye continue in their provocation? Lay down now, put me in surety with thee; who is he that will strike hands with me? For thou hast hid their heart from understanding, therefore shalt thou not exalt them." And again, ver. 8—10. "Upright men shall be astonished at this, and the innocent shall stir up himself against the hypocrite: The righteous also shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger. But as for you all, do ye return and come now, for I cannot find one wise man (i. e. one good man) among you."

Thus, I think, the errors and irregularities that attend this work may he accounted for, from the consideration of the infirmity and common corruption of mankind, together with the circumstances of the work, though we should suppose it to be the work of God. And it would not be a just objection in any to say, If these powerful impressions and great affections are from the Spirit of God, why does not the same Spirit give strength of understanding and capacity in proportion, to those persons who are the subjects of them; so that strong affections may not, through their error, drive them to an irregular and sinful conduct? I do not know that God has any where obliged himself to do it. The end of the influences of God's Spirit is, to make men spiritually wise to salvation, which is the most excellent wisdom; and he has also appointed means for our gaining such degrees of other knowledge as we need, to conduct ourselves regularly, which means should be carefully used. But the end of the influence of the Spirit of God is not to increase men's natural capacities, nor has God obliged himself immediately to increase civil prudence in proportion to the degrees of spiritual light.

If we consider the errors that attend this work, not only as from man and his infirmity, but also as from God and by his permission and disposal, they are not strange, upon the supposition of its being, as to the substance of it, a work of God. If God intends this great revival of religion to be the dawning of a happy state of his church on earth, it may be an instance of the divine wisdom, in the beginning of it, to suffer so many irregularities and errors in conduct, to which he knew men in their present weak state were most exposed, under great religious affections, and when animated with great

zeal. For it is very likely to be of excellent benefit to his church, in the continuance and progress of the work afterwards. Their experience, in the first setting out, of the mischievous consequences of these errors, and smarting for them in the beginning, may be a happy defence to them afterwards, for many generations, from these errors, which otherwise they might continually be exposed to. As when David and all Israel went about to bring back the ark into the midst of the land, after it had been long absent, first in the land of the Philistines, and then in Kirjath-jearim, in the utmost borders of the land; they at first sought not the Lord after the due order, and they smarted for their error. But this put them upon studying the law, and more thoroughly acquainting themselves with the mind and will of God, and seeking and serving him with greater circumspection. The consequence was glorious, viz. their seeking God in such a manner as was accepted of him. The ark of God ascended into the heights of Zion with great and extraordinary rejoicings of the king and all the people, without any frown or rebuke from God intermixed; and God dwelt thenceforward in the midst of the people for those glorious purposes expressed in the 68th Psalm.

It is very analogous to the manner of God's dealing with his people, to permit, a great deal of error, and suffer the infirmity of his people to appear, in the beginning of a glorious work of his grace, for their felicity, to teach them what they are, to humble them, and fit them for that glorious prosperity to which he is about to advance them, and the more to secure to himself the honour of such a glorious work. For, by man's exceeding weakness appearing in the beginning of it, it is evident that God does not lay the foundation of it in man's strength or wisdom. And as we need not wonder at the errors that attend this work, if we look at the hand of men who are guilty of them, and the hand of God in permitting them; so neither shall we see cause to wonder if we consider them with regard to the hand that Satan has in them. For, as the work is much greater than any other that ever has been in New-England; so, no wonder that the devil is more alarmed and enraged, that he exerts himself more vigorously against it, and more powerfully endeavours to tempt and mislead the subjects and promoters of it.

SECT. IV.

The Nature of the Work in general.

WHATEVER imprudences there have been, and whatever sinful irregularities; whatever vehemence of the passions, and heats of the imagination, transports and ecstacies; whatever error in judgment, and indiscreet zeal; and whatever outcries, faintings, and agitations of body; yet, it is manifest and notorious, that there has been of late a very uncommon influence upon the minds of a very great part of the inhabitants of New-England, attended with the best effects. There has been a great increase of seriousness, and sober consideration of eternal things; a disposition to hearken to what is said of such things, with attention and affection; a disposition to treat matters of religion with solemnity, and as of great importance; to make these things the subject of conversation; to hear the word of God preached, and to take all opportunities in order to it; to attend on the public worship of God, and all external duties of religion, in a more solemn and decent manner; so that there is a remarkable and general alteration in the face of New-England in these respects. Multitudes in all parts of the land, of vain, thoughtless, regardless persons, are quite changed, and become serious and considerate. There is a vast increase of concern for the salvation of the precious soul, and of that inquiry, "What shall I do to be saved?" The hearts of multitudes have been greatly taken off from the things of the world, its profits, pleasures, and honours. Multitudes in all parts have had their consciences awakened, and have been made sensible of the pernicious nature and consequences of sin, and what a dreadful thing it is to be under guilt and the displeasure of God, and to live without peace and reconciliation with him. They have also been awakened to a sense of the shortness and uncertainty of life, and the reality of another world and future judgment, and of the necessity of an interest in Christ. They are more afraid of sin, more careful and inquisitive that they may know what is contrary to the mind and will of God, that they may avoid it, and what he requires of them, that they may do it, more careful to guard against temptations, more watchful over their own hearts, earnestly desirous of knowing, and of being diligent in the use of the means that God has appointed in his word, in order to salvation. Many very stupid, senseless sinners, and persons of a vain mind, have been greatly awakened.

There is a strange alteration almost all over New-England

amongst young people: by a powerful invisible influence on their minds, they have been brought to forsake, in a general way, as it were at once, those things of which they were extremely fond, and in which they seemed to place the happiness of their lives, and which nothing before could induce them to forsake; as their frolicking, vain company-keeping, night-walking, their mirth and jollity, their impure language, and lewd songs. In vain did ministers preach against those things before, in vain were laws made to restrain them, and in vain was all the vigilance of magistrates and civil officers; but now they have almost every where dropt them as it were of themselves. And there is great alteration amongst old and young as to drinking, tavern-haunting, profane speaking, and extravagance in apparel. Many notoriously vicious persons have been reformed, and become externally quite new creatures.—Some that are wealthy, and of a fashionable gay education; some great beaux and fine ladies, that seemed to have their minds swallowed up with nothing but the vain shews and pleasures of the world, have been wonderfully altered, have relinquished these vanities, and are become serious, mortified, and humble in their conversation. It is astonishing to see the alteration there is in some towns, where before there was but little appearance of religion, or any thing but vice and vanity. And now they are transformed into another sort of people; their former vain, worldly, and vicious conversation and dispositions seem to be forsaken, and they are, as it were, gone over to a new world. Their thoughts, their talk, and their concern, affections and inquiries, are now about the favour of God, an interest in Christ, a renewed sanctified heart, and a spiritual blessedness, acceptance, and happiness in a future world.

Now, through the greater part of New-England, the holy Bible is in much greater esteem and use than before. The great things contained in it are much more regarded, as things of the greatest consequence, and are much more the subjects of meditation and conversation; and other books of piety that have long been of established reputation, as the most excellent and most tending to promote true godliness, have been abundantly more in use. The Lord's day is more religiously and strictly observed. And much has been lately done at making up differences, confessing faults one to another, and making restitution: probably more within two years, than was done in thirty years before. It has been undoubtedly so in many places. And surprising has been the power of this spirit in many instances, to destroy old grudges, to make up long continued breaches, and to bring those who seemed to be in a confirmed irreconcilable alienation, to embrace each other in a sincere and entire amity. Great

numbers under this influence have been brought to a deep sense of their own sinfulness and vileness; the sinfulness of their lives, the heinousness of their disregard of the authority of the great God, and of their living in contempt of a Saviour. They have lamented their former negligence of their souls, and their neglecting and losing precious time. The sins of their life have been extraordinarily set before them; and they have had a great sense of their hardness of heart, their enmity against that which is good, and proneness to all evil; and also of the worthlessness of their own religious performances, how unworthy of God's regard were their prayers, praises, and all that they did in religion. It has been a common thing, that persons have had such a sense of their own sinfulness, that they have thought themselves to be the worst of all, and that none ever was so vile as they. And many seem to have been greatly convinced that they were utterly unworthy of any mercy at the hands of God, however miserable they were, and though they stood in extreme necessity of mercy; and that they deserved nothing but eternal burnings. They have been sensible that God would be altogether just and righteous in inflicting endless damnation upon them, at the same time that they have had an exceedingly affecting sense of the dreadfulness of such endless torments, and apprehended themselves to be greatly in danger of it. And many have been deeply affected with a sense of their own ignorance and blindness, and exceeding helplessness, and so of their extreme need of the divine pity and help.

Multitudes in New England have lately been brought to a new and great conviction of the truth and certainty of the things of the gospel; to a firm persuasion that Christ Jesus is the son of God, and the great and only Saviour of the world; and that the great doctrines of the gospel touching reconciliation by his blood, and acceptance in his righteousness, and eternal life and salvation through him, are matters of undoubted truth. They have had a most affecting sense of the excellency and sufficiency of this Saviour, and the glorious wisdom and grace of God shining in this way of salvation; and of the wonders of Christ's dying love, and the sincerity of Christ in the invitations of the gospel. They have experienced a consequent affiance and sweet rest of soul in Christ, as a glorious Saviour, a strong rock and high tower; accompanied with an admiring and exalted apprehension of the glory of the divine perfections, God's majesty, holiness, sovereign grace, &c.;—with a sensible, strong and sweet love to God, and delight in him, far surpassing all temporal delights, or earthly pleasures; and a rest of soul in him, as a portion and the fountain of all good. And this has been attended with an abhorrence of sin, and self-loathing for it, and earnest longings of soul after more holiness and conformity to God, with a sense of the great need

of God's help in order to holiness of life: together they have had a most dear love to all that are supposed to be the children of God, and a love to mankind in general, and a most sensible and tender compassion for the souls of sinners, and earnest desires of the advancement of Christ's kingdom in the world. And these things have appeared with an abiding concern to live a holy life, and great complaints of remaining corruption, and a longing to be more free from the body of sin and death. And not only do these effects appear in new converts, but great numbers of those who were formerly esteemed the most sober and pious people, have, under the influence of this work, been greatly quickened, and their hearts renewed with greater degrees of light, renewed repentance and humiliation, and more lively exercises of faith, love and joy in the Lord. Many have been remarkably engaged to watch, and strive, and fight against sin; to cast out every idol, sell all for Christ, give up themselves entirely to God, and make a sacrifice of every worldly and carnal thing to the welfare and prosperity of their souls. And there has of late appeared in some places an unusual disposition to bind themselves to it in a solemn covenant with God. And now, instead of meetings at taverns and drinking-houses, and of young people in frolics and vain company, the country is full of meetings of all sorts and ages of persons—young and old, men, women and little children—to read and pray, and sing praises, and to converse of the things of God and another world. In very many places the main of the conversation in all companies turns on religion, and things of a spiritual nature. Instead of vain mirth among young people, there is now either mourning under a sense of the guilt of sin, or holy rejoicing in Christ Jesus: and, instead of their lewd songs, there are now to be heard from them songs of praise to God, and the Lamb that was slain to redeem them by his blood. And there has been this alteration abiding on multitudes all over the land, for a year and a half, without any appearance of a disposition to return to former vice and vanity.

And, under the influences of this work, there have been many of the remains of those wretched people and dregs of mankind, the poor Indians, that seemed to be next to a state of brutality, and with whom, till now, it seemed to be to little more purpose to use endeavours for their instruction and awakening, than with the beasts. Their minds have now been strangely opened to receive instruction, and been deeply affected with the concerns of their precious souls; they have reformed their lives, and forsaken their former stupid, barbarous and brutish way of living; and particularly that sin to which they have been so exceedingly addicted, their drunkenness. Many of them to appearance brought truly and

greatly to delight in the things of God, and to have their souls very much engaged and entertained with the great things of the gospel. And many of the poor Negroes also have been in like manner wrought upon and changed. Very many little children have been remarkably enlightened, and their hearts wonderfully affected and enlarged, and their mouths opened, expressing themselves in a manner far beyond their years, and to the just astonishment of those who have heard them. Some of them for many months, have been greatly and delightfully affected with the glory of divine things, and the excellency and love of the Redeemer, with their hearts greatly filled with love to, and joy in him; and they have continued to be serious and pious in their behaviour.

The divine power of this work has marvellously appeared in some instances I have been acquainted with; in supporting and fortifying the heart under great trials, such as the death of children, and extreme pain of body; and in wonderfully maintaining the serenity, calmness and joy of the soul, in an immoveable rest in God, and sweet resignation to him. And some under the blessed influences of this work have, in a calm, bright, and joyful frame of mind been carried through the valley of the shadow of death.

And now let us consider:——Is it not strange that in a Christian country, and such a land of light as this is, there are many at a loss to conclude whose work this is, whether the work of God or the work of the devil? Is it not a shame to New England that such a work should be much doubted of here? Need we look over the histories of all past times, to see if there be not some circumstances and external appearances that attend this work, which have been formerly found amongst enthusiasts? Whether the Montanists had not great transports of joy, and whether the French Prophets had not agitations of body? Blessed be God! he does not put us to the toil of such inquiries. We need not say, Who shall ascend into heaven, to bring us down something whereby to judge of this work? Nor does God send us beyond the seas, nor into past ages, to obtain a rule that shall determine and satisfy us; but we have a rule near at hand, a sacred book that God himself has put into our hands, with clear and infallible marks, sufficient to resolve us in things of this nature; which book I think we must reject, not only in some particular passages, but in the substance of it, if we reject such a work as has now been described, as not being the work of God. The whole tenor of the gospel proves it; all the notion of religion that the scripture gives us, confirms it.

I suppose there is scarcely a minister in this land, but from sabbath to sabbath is used to pray that God would pour out his Spirit, and work a reformation and revival of religion in the country, and turn us from our intemperance, profaneness, un-

cleanness, worldliness, and other sins; and we have kept from year to year, days of public fasting and prayer to God, to acknowledge our backslidings, and humble ourselves for our sins, and to seek of God forgiveness and reformation: and now when so great and extensive a reformation is so suddenly and wonderfully accomplished, in those very things that we have sought to God for, shall we not acknowledge it? or, do it with great coldness, caution, and reserve, and scarcely take any notice of it in our public prayers and praises, or mention it but slightly and cursorily, and in such a manner as carries an appearance as though we would contrive to say as little of it as ever we could, and were glad to pass from it? And that because the work is attended with a mixture of error, imprudences, darkness and sin; because some persons are carried away with impressions, and are indiscreet, and too censorious with their zeal; and because there are high transports of religious affections; and some effects on their bodies of which we do not understand the reason.

SECT. V.

The Nature of the Work in a particular Instance.

I HAVE been particularly acquainted with many persons who have been the subjects of the high and extraordinary transports of the present day. But in the highest transports I have been acquainted with, and where the affections of admiration, love and joy, so far as another could judge, have been raised to the highest pitch, the following things have been united, viz. A very frequent dwelling for some considerable time together, in views of the glory of the divine perfections and Christ's excellencies; so that the soul has been as it were perfectly overwhelmed, and swallowed up with light and love, a sweet solace, and a rest and joy of soul altogether unspeakable. The person has more than once continued for five or six hours together, without interruption, in a clear and lively view or sense of the infinite beauty and amiableness of Christ's person, and the heavenly sweetness of his transcendent love. So that, (to use the person's own expressions,) the soul remained in a kind of heavenly elysium, and did as it were swim in the rays of Christ's love, like a little mote swimming in the beams of the sun that come in at a window. The heart was swallowed up in a kind of glow of Christ's love coming down as a constant stream of sweet light, at the same time the soul all flowing out in love to him; so that there seemed to be a constant flowing and reflowing from heart to heart. The

soul dwelt on high, was lost in God, and seemed almost to leave the body. The mind dwelt in a pure delight that fed and satisfied it; enjoying pleasure without the least sting, or any interruption. And, (so far as the judgment and word of a person of discretion may be taken, speaking upon the most deliberate consideration,) what was enjoyed in each single minute of the whole space, which was many hours, was worth more than all the outward comfort and pleasure of the whole life put together; and this without being in any trance, or at all deprived of the exercise of the bodily senses. And this heavenly delight has been enjoyed for years together; though not frequently so long together, to such a height. Extraordinary views of divine things, and the religious affections, were frequently attended with very great effects on the body. Nature often sunk under the weight of divine discoveries, and the strength of the body was taken away. The person was deprived of all ability to stand or speak. Sometimes the hands were clinched, and the flesh cold, but the senses remaining. Animal nature was often in a great emotion and agitation, and the soul so overcome with admiration, and a kind of omnipotent joy, as to cause the person, unavoidably, to leap with all their might, with joy and mighty exultation. The soul at the same time was so strongly drawn towards God and Christ in heaven, that it seemed to the person as though soul and body would as it were of themselves, of necessity mount up, leave the earth, and ascend thither.

These effects on the body were not owing to the influence of example, but began about seven years ago, when there was no such enthusiastical season as many account this, but it was a very dead time through the land. They arose from no distemper catched from Mr. Whitefield, or Mr. Tennant, because they began before either of them came into the country.—Near three years ago, they greatly increased, upon an extraordinary self-dedication, renunciation of the world, and resignation of all to God; which were made in a great view of God's excellency, in high exercise of love to him, and rest and joy in him. Since that time they have been very frequent; and began in a yet higher degree, and greater frequency, about a year and a half ago, upon another new resignation of all to God, with a yet greater fervency and delight of soul; the body often fainting with the love of Christ.—These effects appeared in a higher degree still, the last winter, upon another resignation to and acceptance of God, as the only portion and happiness of the soul, wherein the whole world, with the dearest enjoyments in it, were renounced as dirt and dung. All that is pleasant and glorious and all that is terrible in this world, seemed perfectly to vanish into nothing, and nothing to be left but God, in whom

the soul was perfectly swallowed up, as in an infinite ocean of blessedness.—Since this time there have often been great agitations of body, and an unavoidable leaping for joy; and the soul as it were dwelling, almost without interruption, in a kind of paradise; and very often, in high transports, disposed to speak to others concerning the great and glorious things of God, and Christ, and the eternal world, in a most earnest manner, and with a loud voice, so that it is next to impossible to avoid it. These effects on the body did not arise from any bodily distemper or weakness, because the greatest of all have been in a good state of health.

This great rejoicing has been with trembling, i. e. attended with a deep and lively sense of the greatness and majesty of God, and the person's own exceeding littleness and vileness. Spiritual joys in this person never were attended with the least appearance of laughter, or lightness, either of countenance or manner of speaking; but with a peculiar abhorrence of such appearances in spiritual rejoicings. These high transports, when past, have had abiding effects in the increase of sweetness, rest and humility, which they have left upon the soul; and a new engagedness of heart to live to God's honour, and watch and fight against sin. And these things took place not in the giddy age of youth, nor in a new convert, or unexperienced Christian, but in one that was converted above twenty seven years ago; and neither converted nor educated in that enthusiastic town of Northampton, (as some may be ready to call it,) but in a town and family which none, that I know of, suspected of enthusiasm. And these effects were found in a Christian that has been long, in an uncommon manner, growing in grace, and rising, by very sensible degrees, to higher love to God, weanedness from the world, mastery over sin and temptation, through great trials and conflicts, long-continued strugglings and fighting with sin, earnest and constant prayer and labour in religion, and engagedness of mind in the use of all means, attended with a great exactness of life.—Which growth has been attended, not only with a great increase of religious affections, but with a wonderful alteration of outward behaviour, in many things, visible to those who are most intimately acquainted, so as lately to have become as it were a new person; and particularly in living so much more above the world, and in a greater degree of steadfastness and strength in the way of duty and self denial, maintaining the Christian conflict against temptations, and conquering from time to time under great trials; persisting in an unmoved, untouched calm and rest, under the changes and accidents of time. The person had formerly, in lower degrees of grace, been subject to unsteadiness, and many ups and downs, in the frame of mind, being under great disadvantages, through a vaporous habit

of body, and often subject to melancholy, and at times almost overborne with it, having been so even from early youth.—But strength of grace and divine light has of a long time wholly conquered these disadvantages, and carried the mind, in a constant manner, quite above all such effects. Since that resignation spoken of before, made near three years ago, every thing of that nature seems to be overcome and crushed by the power of faith and trust in God, and resignation to him; the person has remained in a constant uninterrupted rest, humble joy in God, and assurance of his favour, without one hour's melancholy or darkness, from that day to this; vapours have had great effects on the body, such as they used to have before, but the soul has been always out of their reach. And this steadfastness and constancy has remained through great outward changes and trials; such as times of the most extreme pain, and apparent hazard of immediate death.

These transporting views and rapturous affections are not attended with any enthusiastic disposition to follow impulses, or any supposed prophetical revelations; nor have they been observed to be attended with any appearance of spiritual pride, but very much of a contrary disposition, an increase of humility and meekness, and a disposition in honour to prefer others. And it is worthy to be remarked, that when these discoveries and holy affections were evidently at the greatest height—which began early in the morning of the holy sabbath, and lasted for days together, melting all down in the deepest humility and poverty of spirit, reverence and resignation, and the sweetest meekness and universal benevolence—these two things were felt in a remarkable manner, viz. First, a peculiar aversion to judging other professing Christians of good standing in the visible church, with respect to their conversion or degrees of grace; or at all intermeddling with that matter, so much as to determine against and condemn others in the thoughts of the heart. Such want of candour appeared hateful, as not agreeing with that lamb-like humility, meekness, gentleness, and charity, which the soul then, above other times, saw to be beautiful. The disposition then felt was on the contrary, to prefer others to self, and to hope that they saw more of God and loved him better; though before, under smaller discoveries, and feebler exercises of divine affection, there had been a disposition to censure and condemn others. Secondly, another thing that was felt at that time, was a very great sense of the importance of moral social duties, and how great a part of religion lay in them. There was such a new sense and conviction of this, beyond what had been before, that it seemed to be as it were a clear discovery then made to the soul. But, in general, there has been a very great increase

of a sense of these two things, as divine views and divine love have increased.

The things already mentioned have been attended also with the following things, viz. an extraordinary sense of the awful majesty, greatness and holiness of God, so as sometimes to overwhelm soul and body; a sense of the piercing all-seeing eye of God, so as sometimes to take away the bodily strength; and an extraordinary view of the infinite terribleness of the wrath of God; together with a sense of the ineffable misery of sinners who are exposed to this wrath. Sometimes the exceeding pollution of the person's own heart, as a sink of all manner of abomination, and the dreadfulness of an eternal hell of God's wrath, opened to view both together. There was a clear view of a desert of that misery, and that by the pollution of the best duties; yea, only by the irreverence, and want of humility that attended once speaking of the holy name of God, when done in the best manner that ever it was done. The strength of the body was very often taken away with a deep mourning for sin, as committed against so holy and good a God; sometimes with an affecting sense of actual sin, sometimes especially indwelling sin, and sometimes the consideration of the sin of the heart, as appearing in a particular thing, as, for instance, in that there was no greater forwardness and readiness to self-denial for God and Christ, who had so denied himself for us. Yea, sometimes the consideration of sin that was only in speaking one word concerning the infinitely great and holy God, has been so affecting as to overcome the strength of nature. There has been a very great sense of the certain truth of the great things revealed in the gospel; an overwhelming sense of the glory of the work of redemption, and the way of salvation by Jesus Christ; of the glorious harmony of the divine attributes appearing therein, as that wherein mercy and truth are met together, and righteousness and peace have kissed each other. A sight of the fulness and glorious sufficiency of Christ has been so affecting as to overcome the body. A constant immoveable trust in God through Christ, with a great sense of his strength and faithfulness, the sureness of his covenant, and the immutability of his promises, made the everlasting mountains and perpetual hills to appear as mere shadows to these things.

Sometimes the sufficiency and faithfulness of God, as the covenant God of his people, appeared in these words, I AM THAT I AM, in so affecting a manner as to overcome the body. A sense of the glorious, unsearchable, unerring wisdom of God in his works, both of creation and providence, was such as to swallow up the soul, and overcome the strength of the body. There was a sweet rejoicing of soul at the

thoughts of God being infinitely and unchangeably happy, and an exulting gladness of heart that God is self-sufficient, and infin tely above all dependence, and reigns over all, and does his will with absolute and uncontrollable power and sovereignty. A sense of the glory of the Holy Spirit, as the great comforter, was such as to overwhelm both soul and body; only mentioning the word the Comforter, has immediately taken away all strength; that word, as the person expressed it, seemed great enough to fill heaven and earth. There was a most vehement and passionate desire of the honour and glory of God's name; a sensible, clear, and constant preference of it, not only to the person's own temporal interest, but to his spiritual comfort in this world. There was a willingness to suffer the hidings of God's face, and to live and die in darkness and horror, if God's honour should require it, and to have no other reward for it but that God's name should be glorified, although so much of the sweetness of the light of God's countenance had been experienced. A great lamenting of ingratitude and the defect of love to God, took away bodily strength; and there were very often vehement longings and faintings after more love to Christ, and greater conformity to him; especially longing after these two things, viz. to be more perfect in humility and adoration. The flesh and heart seem often to cry out for lying low before God, and adoring him with greater love and humility. The thoughts of the perfect humility with which the saints in heaven worship God, and fall down before his throne, have often overcome the body, and set it into a great agitation. The person felt a great delight in singing praises to God, and Jesus Christ, and longing that this present life may be, as it were, one continued song of praise to God. There was a longing, as the person expressed it, to sit and sing this life away; and an overcoming pleasure in the thoughts of spending an eternity in that exercise. Together with living by faith to a great degree, there was a constant and extraordinary distrust of our own strength and wisdom; a great dependence on God for his help in order to the performance of any thing to God's acceptance, and being restrained from the most horrid sins.

A sense of the black ingratitude of true saints, as to coldness and deadness in religion, and their setting their hearts on the things of this world, has overcome the bodily frame. There was an experience of great longing that all the children of God might be lively in religion, fervent in their love, and active in the service of God; and, when there have been appearances of it in others, rejoicing so in beholding the pleasant sight, that the joy of soul has been too great for the body.—The person took pleasure in the thoughts of watch-

ing and striving against sin, fighting through the way to heaven, and filling up this life with hard labour, and bearing the cross for Christ, as an opportunity to give God honour; not desiring to rest from labours till arrived in heaven, but abhorring the thoughts of it, and seeming astonished that God's own should be backward to strive and deny themselves for God. There were earnest longings that all God's people might be clothed with humility and meekness like the Lamb of God, and feel nothing in their hearts but love and compassion to all mankind; and great grief when any thing to the contrary appeared in any of the children of God, as bitterness, fierceness of zeal, censoriousness, or reflecting uncharitably on others, or disputing with any appearance of heat of spirit; a deep concern for the good of others' souls; a melting compassion to those that looked on themselves as in a state of nature, and to saints under darkness, so as to cause the body to faint. There was found an universal benevolence to mankind, with a longing, as it were, to embrace the whole world in the arms of pity and love; and ideas of suffering from enemies the utmost conceivable rage and cruelty, with a disposition felt to fervent love and pity in such a case, so far as it could be realized in thought. Sometimes a disposition was felt to a life given up to mourning alone in a wilderness over a lost and miserable world; compassion towards them being often to that degree, that would allow of no support or rest, but in going to God, and pouring out the soul in prayer for them. Earnest desires were felt that the work of God, now in the land, may be carried on, and that with greater purity, and freedom from all bitter zeal, censoriousness, spiritual pride, hot disputes, &c. and a vehement and constant desire for the setting up of Christ's kingdom through the earth, as a kingdom of holiness, purity, love, peace, and happiness to mankind.

The soul often entertained, with unspeakable delight, the thoughts of heaven, as a world of love; where love shall be the saint's eternal food, where they shall dwell in the light, and swim in an ocean of love, and where the very air and breath will be nothing but love; love to the people of God, or God's true saints, as having the image of Christ, and as those who will in a very little time shine in his perfect image. The strength was very often taken away with longings that others might love God more, and serve God better, and have more of his comfortable presence, than the person that was the subject of these longings; desiring to follow the whole world to heaven, or that every one should go before, and be higher in grace and happiness, not by this person's diminution, but by others' increase. This experience included a delight in conversing on religious subjects, and in seeing

Christians together, talking of the most spiritual and heavenly things in religion, in a lively and feeling manner; and very frequently the person was overcome with the pleasure of such conversation. A great sense was often expressed, of the importance of the duty of charity to the poor, and how much the generality of Christians come short in the practice of it.—There was also a great sense of the need ministers have of much of the Spirit of God, at this day especially; and there were most earnest longings and wrestlings with God for them, so as to take away the bodily strength. It also included the greatest, fullest, longest continued, and most constant assurance of the favour of God, and of a title to future glory, that ever I saw any appearance of in any person, enjoying, especially of late, (to use the person's own expression,) *the riches of full assurance.* Formerly there was a longing to die with something of impatience; but lately, since that resignation forementioned, about three years ago, an uninterrupted entire resignation to God, with respect to life or death, sickness or health, ease or pain, which has remained unchanged and unshaken, when actually under extreme and violent pains, and in times of threatenings of immediate death. But notwithstanding this patience and submission, the thoughts of death and the day of judgment are always exceeding sweet to the soul. This resignation is also attended with a constant resignation of the lives of dearest earthly friends, and sometimes when some of their lives have been imminently threatened; the person often expressing the sweetness of the liberty of having wholly left the world, and renounced all for God, and having nothing but God, in whom is an infinite fulness. These things have been attended with a constant sweet peace and calm, and serenity of soul, without any cloud to interrupt it; a continual rejoicing in all the works of God's hands, the works of nature, and God's daily works of providence, all appearing with a sweet smile upon them; a wonderful access to God by prayer, as it were seeing him and immediately conversing with him, as much oftentimes (to use the person's own expressions) as if Christ were here on earth, sitting on a visible throne, to be approached to and conversed with.

There have been frequent, plain, sensible, and immediate answers of prayer, all tears wiped away, all former troubles and sorrows of life forgotten, and all sorrow and sighing fled away—excepting grief for past sins, and for remaining corruption, and that Christ is loved no more, and that God is no more honoured in the world; and a compassionate grief towards fellow-creatures—a daily sensible doing and suffering every thing for God, for a long time past, eating, working, sleeping, and bearing pain and trouble for God, and doing all as the service of love, with a continual uninterrupted cheer-

fulness, peace, and joy. Oh! how good, said the person once, is it to work for God in the day-time, and at night to lie down under his smiles! High experiences and religious affections in this person have not been attended with any disposition at all to neglect the necessary business of a secular calling, to spend the time in reading and prayer, and other exercises of devotion; but worldly business has been attended with great alacrity, as part of the service of God: the person declaring that, it being done thus, it was found to be as good as prayer. These things have been accompanied with exceeding concern and zeal for moral duties, and that all professors may with them adorn the doctrine of God their saviour, and an uncommon care to perform relative and social duties, and a noted eminence in them; a great inoffensiveness of life and conversation in the sight of others; a great meekness, gentleness, and benevolence of spirit and behaviour; and a great alteration in those things that formerly used to be the person's failings; seeming to be much overcome and swallowed up by the late great increase of grace, to the observation of those who are most conversant and most intimately acquainted.

In times of the brightest light and highest flights of love and joy, there was found no disposition to the opinion of being now perfectly free from sin, (according to the notion of the Wesleys and their followers, and some other high pretenders to spirituality in these days,) but exceedingly the contrary.—At such times especially, it was seen how loathsome and polluted the soul is; soul and body and every act and word appearing like rottenness and corruption in that pure and holy light of God's glory. The person did not slight instruction or means of grace any more for having had great discoveries; on the contrary, never was more sensible of the need of instruction than now. And one thing more may be added, viz. That these things have been attended with a particular dislike of placing religion much in dress, and spending much zeal about those things that in themselves are matters of indifference, or an affecting to shew humility and devotion by a mean habit, or a demure and melancholy countenance, or any thing singular and superstitious.

SECT. VI.

This Work is very Glorious.

Now if such things are enthusiasm, and the fruits of a distempered brain, let my brain be evermore possessed

of that happy distemper! If this be distraction, I pray God that the world of mankind may be all seized with this benign, meek, beneficent, beatifical, glorious distraction! If agitations of body were found in the French Prophets. and ten thousand prophets more, it is little to their purpose who bring it as an objection against such a work as this, unless their purpose be to disprove the whole of the Christian religion. The great affections and high transports, that others have lately been under, are in general of the same kind with those in the instance that has been given, though not to so high a degree, and many of them not so pure and unmixed, and so well regulated. I have had opportunity to observe many instances here and elsewhere; and though there are some instances of great affections in which there has been a great mixture of nature with grace, and in some, a sad degenerating of religious affections; yet there is that uniformity observable, which makes it easy to be seen, that in general it is the same spirit from whence the work in all parts of the land has originated. And what notions have they of religion, that reject what has been described, as not true religion! What shall we find to answer those expressions in scripture, "The peace of God that passeth all understanding; rejoicing with joy unspeakable and full of glory, in believing in, and loving an unseen Saviour;—All joy and peace in believing; God's shining into our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ; With open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, and being changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord;—Having the love of God shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost given to us;—Having the Spirit of God and of glory rest upon us;—A being called out of darkness into marvellous light; and having the day star arise in our hearts:"—I say, if those things which have been mentioned, do not answer these expressions, what else can we find out that does answer them? Those that do not think such things as these to be the fruits of the true spirit, would do well to consider what kind of spirit they are waiting and praying for, and what sort of fruits they expect he should produce when he comes. I suppose it will generally be allowed, that there is such a thing as a glorious outpouring of the Spirit of God to be expected, to introduce very joyful and glorious times upon religious accounts; times wherein holy love and joy will be raised to a great height in true Christians: But, if those things be rejected, what is left that we can find wherewith to patch up a notion, or form an idea, of the high, blessed, joyful religion of these times? What is there sweet, excellent, and joyful, of a religious nature, that is entirely of a different nature from these things?

Those who are waiting for the fruits, in order to determine whether this be the work of God or no, would do well to consider, what they are waiting for: Whether it be not to have this wonderful religious influence, and then to see how they will behave themselves? That is, to have grace subside, and the actings of it in a great measure to cease, and to have persons grow cold and dead; and then to see whether, after that, they will behave themselves with that exactness and brightness of conversation, that is to be expected of lively Christians, or those that are in the vigorous exercises of grace. There are many that will not be satisfied with any exactness or laboriousness in religion now, while persons have their minds much moved, and their affections are high; for they lay it to their flash of affection, and heat of zeal, as they call it; they are waiting to see whether they will carry themselves as well as when these affections are over; that is, they are waiting to have persons sicken and lose their strength, that they may see whether they will then behave themselves like healthy strong men. I would desire that they would also consider, whether they be not waiting for more than is reasonably to be expected, supposing this to be really a great work of God, and much more than has been found in former great outpourings of the Spirit of God, that have been universally acknowledged in the Christian church? Do not they expect fewer instances of apostacy and evidences of hypocrisy in professors, than were after that great outpouring of the Spirit in the apostles' days, or that which was in the time of the reformation? And do not they stand prepared to make a mighty argument of it against this work, if there should be half so many? And, they would do well to consider how *long* they will wait to see the good fruit of this work, before they will determine in favour of it. Is not their waiting unlimited? The visible fruit that is to be expected of a pouring out of the Spirit of God on a country, is a visible reformation in that country. What reformation has lately been brought to pass in New England, by this work, has been before observed. And has it not continued long enough already, to give reasonable satisfaction? If God cannot work on the hearts of a people after such a manner, as reasonably to expect it should be acknowledged in a year and a half, or two years' time; yet surely it is unreasonable that our expectations and demands should be unlimited, and our waiting without any bounds.

As there is the clearest evidence, from what has been observed, that this is the work of God; so it is evident that it is a very great and wonderful, and exceeding glorious work.---- This is certain, that it is a great and wonderful event, a

strange revolution, an unexpected, surprising overturning of things, suddenly brought to pass; such as never has been seen in New-England, and scarce ever has been heard of in any land. Who that saw the state of things in New-England a few years ago, would have thought that in so short a time there would be such a change? This is undoubtedly either a very great work of God, or a great work of the devil, as to the main substance of it. For though, undoubtedly, God and the devil may work together at the same time, and in the same land; and Satan will do his utmost endeavour to intrude, and, by intermingling his work, to darken and hinder God's work; yet God and the devil do not work together in producing the same event, and in effecting the same change in the hearts and lives of men. But it is apparent that as to some things, wherein the main substance of this work consists, there is a likeness and agreement every where: now this is either a wonderful work of God, or a mighty work of the devil; and so is either a most happy event, greatly to be admired and rejoiced in, or a most awful calamity. Therefore, if what has been said before be sufficient to determine it to be, as to the main, the work of God, then it must be acknowledged to be a very wonderful and glorious work of God.

Such a work is, in its nature and kind, the most glorious of any work of God whatsoever, and is always so spoken of in scripture. It is the work of redemption (the great end of all the other works of God, and of which the work of creation was but a shadow) in the event, success, and end of it: It is the work of new creation, which is infinitely more glorious than the old. I am bold to say, that the work of God in the conversion of one soul, considered together with the source, foundation, and purchase of it, and also the benefit, end, and eternal issue of it, is a more glorious work of God than the creation of the whole material universe. It is the most glorious of God's works, as it above all others manifests the glory of God; it is spoken of in scripture, as that which shews "the exceeding greatness of God's power," and "the glory and riches of divine grace," and wherein Christ has the most glorious triumph over his enemies, and wherein God is mightily exalted. And it is a work above all others glorious, as it concerns the happiness of mankind; more happiness, and a greater benefit to man, is the fruit of each single drop of such a shower, than all the temporal good of the most happy revolution, or all that a people could gain by the conquest of the world.

This work is very glorious both in its *nature*, and in its *degree* and *circumstances*. It will appear very glorious, if we consider the unworthiness of the people who are the subjects

of it; what obligations God has laid us under by the special privileges we have enjoyed for our souls' good, and the great things God did for us at our first settlement in the land; how he has followed us with his goodness to this day, and how we have abused his goodness; how long we have been revolting more and more, (as all confess,) and how very corrupt we were become at last; in how great a degree we had forsaken the fountain of living waters; how obstinate we have been under all manner of means that God has used to reclaim us; how often we have mocked God with hypocritical pretences of humiliation, as in our annual days of public fasting, and other things, while, instead of reforming, we only grew worse and worse; and how dead a time it was every where before this work began. If we consider these things, we shall be most stupidly ungrateful, if we do not acknowledge God's visiting us as he has done, as an instance of the glorious triumph of free and sovereign grace.

The work is very glorious, if we consider the extent of it; being in this respect vastly beyond any that ever was known in New-England. There has formerly sometimes been a remarkable awakening and success of the means of grace, in some particular congregations; and this used to be much noticed and acknowledged to be glorious, though the towns and congregations round about continued dead: But now God has brought to pass a new thing, he has wrought a great work, which has extended from one end of the land to the other, besides what has been wrought in other British colonies in America.

The work is very glorious in the great numbers that have, to appearance, been turned from sin to God, and so delivered from a wretched captivity to sin and Satan, saved from everlasting burnings, and made heirs of eternal glory. How high an honour, and great a reward of their labours, have some eminent persons of note in the church of God signified that they should esteem it, if they should be made the instruments of the conversion and eternal salvation of but one soul? And no greater event than that, is thought worthy of great notice in heaven among the hosts of glorious angels, who rejoice and sing on such an occasion. Now, when there are many thousands of souls thus converted and saved, shall it be esteemed worth but little notice, and be mentioned with coldness and indifference here on earth, by those among whom such a work is wrought?

The work has been very glorious and wonderful in many circumstances and events of it, wherein God has in an uncommon manner made his hand visible and his power conspicuous; as in the extraordinary degrees of awakening, and the sud-

denness of conversions in innumerable instances. How common a thing has it been for a great part of a congregation to be at once moved by a mighty invisible power? and for six, eight, or ten souls to be converted to God (to all appearance) in an exercise, in whom the visible change still continues? How great an alteration has been made in some towns, yea, some populous towns, the change still abiding? And how many very vicious persons have been wrought upon, so as to become visibly new creatures? God has also made his hand very visible, and his work glorious, in the multitudes of little children that have been wrought upon. I suppose there have been some hundreds of instances of this nature of late, any one of which formerly would have been looked upon so remarkable, as to be worthy to be recorded, and published through the land. The work is very glorious in its influences and effects on many who have been very ignorant and barbarous, as I before observed, of the Indians and Negroes.

The work is also exceeding glorious in the high attainments of Christians, in the extraordinary degrees of light, love and spiritual joy, that God has bestowed upon great multitudes. In this respect also, the land in all parts has abounded with such instances, any one of which, if they had happened formerly, would have been thought worthy to be noticed by God's people throughout the British dominions. The New-Jerusalem in this respect has begun to come down from heaven, and perhaps never were more of the prelibations of heaven's glory given upon earth.

There being a great many errors and sinful irregularities mixed with this work of God, arising from our weakness, darkness and corruption, does not hinder this work of God's power and grace from being very glorious. Our follies and sins in some respects manifest the glory of it. The glory of divine power and grace is set off with the greater lustre, by what appears at the same time of the weakness of the earthen vessel. It is God's pleasure to manifest the weakness and unworthiness of the subject, at the same time that he displays the excellency of his power and the riches of his grace. And I doubt not but some of these things which make some of us here on earth to be out of humour, and to look on this work with a sour displeased countenance, heighten the songs of the angels, when they praise God and the Lamb for what they see of the glory of God's all-sufficiency, and the efficacy of Christ's redemption. And how unreasonable is it that we should be backward to acknowledge the glory of what God has done, because the devil, and we in hearkening to him, have done a great deal of mischief!

PART II.

SHEWING THE OBLIGATIONS THAT ALL ARE UNDER TO ACKNOWLEDGE, REJOICE IN, AND PROMOTE THIS WORK; AND THE GREAT DANGER OF THE CONTRARY.

SECT. I.

The Danger of lying still, and keeping long Silence respecting any remarkable Work of God.

THERE are many things in the word of God, showing that when God remarkably appears in any great work for his church, and against his enemies, it is a most dangerous thing, and highly provoking to God, to be slow and backward to acknowledge and honour God in the work. Christ's people are in Scripture represented as his army; he is the Lord of hosts, the captain of the host of the Lord, as he called himself when he appeared to Joshua, with a sword drawn in his hand, Joshua v. 13—15; the captain of his people's salvation: And therefore it may well be highly resented, if they do not resort to him when he orders his banner to be displayed; or if they refuse to follow him when he blows the trumpet, and gloriously appears going forth against his enemies. God expects that every living soul should have his attention roused on such an occasion, and should most cheerfully yield to the call, and heedfully and diligently obey it. Isa. xviii. 3. "All ye inhabitants of the world, and dwellers on the earth, see ye when he lifteth up an ensign on the mountains; and when he bloweth the trumpet, hear ye." Especially should all Israel be gathered after their Captain, as we read they were after Ehud, when he blew the trumpet in Mount Ephraim, when he had slain Eglon king of Moab, Judges iii. 27, 28. How severe is the martial law in such a case, when any of the army refuses to obey the sound of the trumpet, and follow his general to the battle? God at such a time appears in peculiar manifestations of his glory; and therefore, not to be affected and animated, and to lie still, and refuse to follow God, will be resented as a high contempt of him. Suppose a subject should stand by, and be a specta-

tor of the solemnity of his prince's coronation, and should appear silent and sullen, when all the multitude were testifying their loyalty and joy with loud acclamations; how greatly would he expose himself to be treated as a rebel, and quickly to perish by the authority of the prince that he refuses to honour.

At a time when God manifests himself in such a great work for his church, there is no such thing as being neuters; there is a necessity of being either for or against the king that then gloriously appears. When a king is crowned, and there are public manifestations of joy on that occasion, there is no such thing as standing by as an indifferent spectator; all must appear as loyal subjects, and express their joy on that occasion, or be accounted enemies. So when God, in any great dispensation of his providence, remarkably sets his king on his holy hill of Zion, Christ in an extraordinary manner comes down from heaven to the earth, and appears in his visible church in a great work of salvation for his people. When Christ came down from heaven in his incarnation, and appeared on earth in his human presence, there was no such thing as being neuters, neither on his side nor against him. Those who sat still and said nothing, and did not declare for him, and come and join with him, after he, by his word and works, had given sufficient evidence who he was, were justly looked upon as his enemies; Matt. xii. 30. "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad." So it is when Christ comes to carry on the work of redemption in the application of it, as well as in its revelation and purchase. If a king should come into one of his provinces, which had been oppressed by its foes, where some of his subjects had fallen off to the enemy, and joined with them against their lawful sovereign and his loyal subjects; I say, if the royal sovereign himself should come into the province, and should ride forth there against his enemies, and should call upon all who were on his side to come and gather themselves to him; there would be no such thing, in such a case, as standing neuter. They who lay still and staid at a distance, would undoubtedly be looked upon and treated as rebels. So in the day of battle, when two armies join, there is no such thing for any present as being of neither party, all must be on one side or the other; and they who are not found with the conqueror in such a case, must expect to have his weapons turned against them, and to fall with the rest of his enemies.

When God manifests himself with such glorious power in a work of this nature, he appears especially determined to put honour upon his Son, and to fulfil his oath that he has sworn to him, that he would make every knee to bow,

and every tongue to confess to him. God hath had it much on his heart, from all eternity, to glorify his dear and only-begotten Son; and there are some special seasons that he appoints to that end, wherein he comes forth with omnipotent power to fulfil his promise and oath to him. Now these are times of remarkable pouring out of his spirit, to advance his kingdom; such is a day of his power, wherein his people shall be made willing, and he shall rule in the midst of his enemies; these especially are the times wherein God declares his firm decree, that his Son shall reign on his holy hill of Zion. And therefore those who at such a time do not kiss the Son, as he then manifests himself, and appears in the glory of his majesty and grace, expose themselves to *perish from the way*, and to be *dashed in pieces with a rod of iron.*

As such is a time wherein God eminently *sets his King on his holy hill of* Zion, so it is a time wherein he remarkably fulfils that in Isa. xxviii. 16. "Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation." Which the two apostles Peter and Paul (1 Pet. ii. 6, 7, 8. and Rom. ix. 33.) join with that prophecy, Isa. viii. 14, 15. "And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling, and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And many among them shall stumble and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken." As signifying that both are fulfilled together. Yea, both are joined together by the prophet Isaiah himself; as you may see in the context of that forementioned place. Isa. xxviii. 16. In ver. 13. preceding it is said, "But the word of the Lord was unto them, precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little and there a little; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared and taken." And accordingly, when Christ is in a peculiar and eminent manner manifested and magnified, by a glorious work of God in his church, as a foundation and a sanctuary for some, he is remarkably a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence, a gin and a snare to others. They who continue long to stumble, and to be offended and ensnared in their minds, at such a great and glorious work of Christ, in God's account, stumble at Christ, and are offended in him; for the work is that by which he makes Christ manifest, and shews his glory, and by which he makes *the stone that the builders refused, to become the head of the corner.* This shews how dangerous it is to continue always stumbling at such a work, for ever doubting of it, and forbearing fully to acknowledge it, and give God the glory of it. Such persons are in danger to *go and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken,* and to have Christ, *a stone of stumbling* to them, that shall be

an occasion of their ruin; while he is to others a sanctuary, and a sure foundation.

The prophet Isaiah, (Isa. xxix. 14.) speaks of God's proceeding to do a marvellous work and a wonder, which should stumble and confound the wisdom of the wise and prudent; which the apostle in Acts xiii. 41, applies to the glorious work of salvation wrought in those days by the redemption of Christ, and that glorious outpouring of the Spirit to apply it which followed. The prophet in the context of that place in Isa. xxix. speaking of the same thing, and of the prophets and rulers and seers, those wise and prudent whose eyes God had closed, says to them, ver. 9. "Stay yourselves and wonder." In the original it is, "Be ye slow and wonder." I leave it to others to consider whether it be not natural to interpret it thus, "Wonder at this *marvellous work*; let it be a strange thing, a great mystery that you know not what to make of, and that you are very slow and backward to acknowledge, long delaying to come to a determination concerning it." And what persons are in danger, and are thus slow to acknowledge God in such a work, we learn from the apostle in that forementioned place, Acts xiii. 41. "Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish; for I work a work in your days, a work in which you shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you."

The church of Christ is called upon greatly to rejoice, when at any time Christ remarkably appears, coming to his church, to carry on the work of salvation, to enlarge his own kingdom, and to deliver poor souls out of the pit wherein there is no water. Zech ix. 9, 10, 11. "Rejoice, greatly O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold, thy king cometh unto thee; he is just, and having salvation: His dominion shall be from sea to sea. As for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant, I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water." Christ was pleased to give a notable typical, or symbolical representation of such a great event as is spoken of in that prophecy, in his solemn entry into the literal Jerusalem, which was a type of the church or daughter of Zion; probably intending it as a figure and prelude of that great actual fulfilment of this prophecy, that was to be after his ascension, by the pouring out of the Spirit in the days of the apostles, and that more full accomplishment that should be in the latter ages of the Christian church. We have an account that when Christ made this his solemn entry into Jerusalem, and the whole multitude of the disciples were rejoicing and praising God, with loud voices, for all the mighty works that they had seen, the Pharisees from among the multitude said to Christ, "Master, rebuke thy disciples;" but we are told, Luke xix. 39, 40. Christ "answered and said unto them, I tell you, that if these should hold their peace, the stones would imme-

diately cry out." Signifying, that if Christ's professing disciples should be unaffected on such an occasion, and should not appear openly to acknowledge and rejoice in the glory of God therein appearing, it would manifest such fearful hardness of heart, that the very stones would condemn them. Should not this make those consider, who have held their peace so long since Christ has come to our Zion, having salvation, and so wonderfully manifested his glory in this mighty work of his Spirit, and so many of his disciples have been "rejoicing and praising God with loud voices?"

It must be acknowledged, that so great and wonderful a work of God's Spirit, is a work wherein God's hand is remarkably *lifted up*, and wherein he displays his *majesty*, and shews great *favour* and mercy to sinners, in the glorious opportunity he gives them, and by which he makes our land to become much more a *land of uprightness*. Therefore that place, Isa. xxvi. 10, 11. shews the great danger of not seeing God's hand, and acknowledging his glory and majesty in such a work.—"Let favour be shewed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness. In the land of uprightness he will deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the Lord. Lord, when thy hand is lifted up they will not see; but they shall see, and be ashamed for their envy at the people; yea, the fire of thine enemies shall devour them."

SECT. II.

The Latter-Day Glory is probably to begin in America.

It is not unlikely that this work of God's Spirit, so extraordinary and wonderful, is the dawning, or at least a prelude of that glorious work of God, so often foretold in scripture, which, in the progress and issue of it, shall renew the world of mankind. If we consider how long since the things foretold as what should precede this great event, have been accomplished; and how long this event has been expected by the church of God, and thought to be nigh by the most eminent men of God, in the church; and withal consider what the state of things now is, and has for a considerable time been, in the church of God, and the world of mankind; we cannot reasonably think otherwise, than that the beginning of this great work of God must be near. And there are many things that make it probable that this work will begin in America.—It is signified that it shall begin in some very remote part of the world, with which other parts have no communication but by navigation, in Isa. lx. 9. "Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring my sons from far." It is

exceeding manifest that this chapter is a prophecy of the prosperity of the church, in its most glorious state on earth, in the latter days; and I cannot think that any thing else can be here intended but America by the isles that are far off, from whence the first-born sons of that glorious day shall be brought. Indeed, by *the isles*, in prophecies of gospel-times, is very often meant Europe. It is so in prophecies of that great spreading of the gospel that should be soon after Christ's time, because it was far separated from that part of the world where the church of God had till then been, by the sea. But this prophecy cannot have respect to the conversion of Europe, in the time of that great work of God, in the primitive ages of the Christian church; for it was not fulfilled then. The isles and ships of Tarshish, thus understood, did not wait for God first; that glorious work did not begin in Europe, but in Jerusalem, and had for a considerable time been very wonderfully carried on in Asia, before it reached Europe. And as it is not *that* work of God which is chiefly intended in this chapter, but some more glorious work that should be in the latter ages of the Christian church; therefore, some other part of the world is here intended by the isles, that should be, as Europe then was, far separated from that part of the world where the church had before been, and with which it can have no communication but by the ships of Tarshish. And what is chiefly intended is not the British isles, nor any isles near the other continent; they are spoken of as at a great distance from that part of the world where the church had till then been. This prophecy therefore seems plainly to point out America, as the first-fruits of that glorious day.

God has made as it were two worlds here below, two great habitable continents, far separated one from the other: The latter is as it were now but newly created; it has been, till of late, wholly the possession of Satan, the church of God having never been in it, as it has been in the other continent, from the beginning of the world. This new world is probably now discovered, that the new and most glorious state of God's church on earth might commence there; that God might in it begin a new world in a spiritual respect, when he creates the *new heavens* and *new earth*.

God has already put that honour upon the other continent, that Christ was born there literally, and there made the "purchase of redemption." So, as Providence observes a kind of equal distribution of things, it is not unlikely that the great spiritual birth of Christ, and the most glorious "application of redemption," is to begin in this. The elder sister brought forth Judah, of whom Christ came, and so she was the mother of Christ; but the younger sister, after long barrenness, brought forth Joseph and Benjamin, the beloved children, Joseph who

had the most glorious apparel, the coat of many colours; who was separated from his brethren, and was exalted to great glory out of a dark dungeon—who fed and saved the world when ready to perish with famine, and was as a fruitful bough by a well, whose branches ran over the wall, and was blessed with all manner of blessings and precious things of heaven and earth, through the good-will of him that dwelt in the bush—was, as by the horns of an unicorn, to push the people together to the ends of the earth, i. e. conquer the world. See Gen. xlix. 22, &c. and Deut. xxxiii. 13, &c. And Benjamin, whose mess was five times so great as that of any of his brethren, and to whom Joseph, that type of Christ, gave wealth and raiment far beyond all the rest, Gen. xlv. 22.

The other continent hath slain Christ, and has from age to age shed the blood of the saints and martyrs of Jesus, and has often been as it were, deluged with the church's blood.—God has, therefore, probably reserved the honour of building the glorious temple to the daughter that has not shed so much blood, when those times of the peace, prosperity and glory of the church, typified by the reign of Solomon, shall commence.

The Gentiles first received the true religion from the Jews: God's church of ancient times had been among them, and Christ was of them. But, that there may be a kind of equality in the dispositions of Providence, God has so ordered it, that when the Jews come to be admitted to the benefits of the evangelical dispensation, and to receive their highest privileges of all, they should receive the gospel from the Gentiles. Though Christ was of them, yet they have been guilty of crucifying him; it is therefore the will of God, that the Jews should not have the honour of communicating the blessings of the kingdom of God in its most glorious state to the Gentiles; but on the contrary, they shall receive the gospel in the beginning of that glorious day from the Gentiles. In some analogy to this, I apprehend, God's dealings will be with the two continents. America has received the true religion of the old continent; the church of ancient time has been there, and Christ is from thence. But that there may be an equality, and inasmuch as that Continent has crucified Christ, they shall not have the honour of communicating religion in its most glorious state to us, but we to them.

The old continent has been the source and original of mankind in several respects. The first parents of mankind dwelt there; and there dwelt Noah and his sons; there the second Adam was born, and crucified, and raised again: And it is probable that, in some measure to balance these things, the most glorious renovation of the world shall originate from the new continent, and the church of God in that respect be from

hence. And so it is probable that will come to pass in spirituals, which has taken place in temporals, with respect to America: that whereas, till of late, the world was supplied with its silver, and gold, and earthly treasures from the old continent, now it is supplied chiefly from the new; so the course of things in spiritual respects will be in like manner turned.—And it is worthy to be noted, that America was discovered about the time of the reformation, or but little before: Which reformation was the first thing that God did towards the glorious renovation of the world, after it had sunk into the depths of darkness and ruin, under the great anti-christian apostacy. So that, as soon as this new world stands forth in view, God presently goes about doing some great thing in order to make way for the introduction of the church's latter-day glory—which is to have its first seat in, and is to take its rise from that new world.

It is agreeable to God's manner, when he accomplishes any glorious work in the world, in order to introduce a new and more excellent state of his church, to begin where no foundation had been already laid, that the power of God might be the more conspicuous; that the work might appear to be entirely God's, and be more manifestly a creation out of nothing: agreeable to Hos. i. 10. "And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God." When God is about to turn the earth into a paradise, he does not begin his work where there is some good growth already, but in the wilderness, where nothing grows, and nothing is to be seen but dry sand and barren rocks; that the light may shine out of darkness, the world be replenished from emptiness, and the earth watered by springs from a droughty desert: agreeable to many prophecies of scripture, as Isa. xxxii. 15. "Until the spirit be poured from on high, and the wilderness become a fruitful field." And chap. xli. 18, 19. "I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water. I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the shittah-tree, and the myrtle, and the oil-tree: I will set in the desert, the fir-tree, and the pine, and the box-tree together." And chap. xliii. 20. "I will give waters in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert, to give drink to my people, my chosen." And many other parallel scriptures might be mentioned. Now as when God is about to do some great work for his church, his manner is to begin at the lower end; so, when he is about to renew the whole habitable earth, it is probable that he will begin in this utmost, meanest, youngest and weakest part of it, where the church of God has been planted last of all; and so the first shall be last, and the last first; and that will

be fulfilled in an eminent manner in Isa. xxiv. 19. "From the uttermost part of the earth have we heard songs, even glory to the righteous."

There are several things that seem to me to argue, that the sun of righteousness, the sun of the new heavens and new earth, when he rises—and "comes forth as the bridegroom" of his church, "rejoicing as a strong man to run his race, having his going forth from the end of heaven, and his circuit to the end of it, that nothing may be hid from the light and heat of it,"* shall rise in the west, contrary to the course of things in the old heavens and earth. The movements of Providence shall in that day be so wonderfully altered in many respects, that God will as it were change the course of nature, in answer to the prayers of his church; as he caused the sun to go from the west to the east, when he promised to do such great things for his church; a deliverance out of the hand of the king of Assyria, is often used by the prophet Isaiah, as a type of the glorious deliverance of the church from her enemies in the latter days. The resurrection as it were of Hezekiah, the king and captain of the church, (as he is called, 2 Kings xx. 5.) is given as an earnest of the church's resurrection and salvation, Isa. xxxviii. 6, and is a type of the resurrection of Christ. At the same time there is a resurrection of the sun, or coming back and rising again from the west, whither it had gone down; which is also a type of the sun of righteousness. The sun was brought back ten degrees; which probably brought it to the meridian. The sun of righteousness has long been going down from east to west; and probably when the time comes of the church's deliverance from her enemies, so often typified by the Assyrians, the light will rise in the west, till it shines through the world like the sun in its meridian brightness.

The same seems also to be represented by the course of the waters of the sanctuary, Ezek. xlvii. which was from west to east; which waters undoubtedly represented the Holy Spirit, in the progress of his saving influences, in the latter ages of the world; for it is manifest, that the whole of those last chapters of Ezekiel treat concerning the glorious state of the church at that time. And if we may suppose that this glorious work of God shall begin in any part of America, I think, if we consider the circumstances of the settlement of New England, it must needs appear the most likely, of all American colonies, to be the place whence this work shall

* It is evident that the Holy Spirit, in those expressions in Psal. xix. 4, 6. has respect to something else besides the natural sun, and that a regard is had to the sun of righteousness, who by his light converts the soul, makes wise the simple, enlightens the eyes, and rejoices the heart; and by his preached gospel enlightens and warms the world of mankind: by the Psalmist's own application in ver. 7. and the apostle's application of ver. 4. in Rom x. 18.

principally takes its rise. And, if these things be so, it gives us more abundant reason to hope that what is now seen in America, and especially in New-England, may prove the dawn of that glorious day; and the very uncommon and wonderful circumstances and events of this work, seem to me strongly to argue that God intends it as the beginning or forerunner of something vastly greater.

SECT. III.

The Danger of not acknowledging and encouraging, and especially of deriding this Work.

I HAVE thus long insisted on this point, because, if these things are so, it greatly manifests how much it behoves us to encourage and promote this work, and how dangerous it will be to forbear so doing. It is very dangerous for God's professing people to lie still, and not to come to the help of the Lord, whenever he remarkably pours out his Spirit, to carry on the work of redemption in the application of it; but above all, when he comes forth to introduce that happy day of God's power and salvation, so often spoken of. That is especially the appointed season of the application of redemption; the appointed time of Christ's reign; the reign of Satan as god of this world lasts till then; but afterwards will be the proper time of actual redemption, or new creation, as is evident by Isa. lxv. 17, 18, &c. and lxvi. 12. and Rev. xxi. 1. All the outpourings of the Spirit of God, before this, are as it were by way of anticipation. There was indeed a glorious season of the application of redemption in the first ages of the Christian church, which began at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost; but that was not the proper time of ingathering. It was only as it were the feast of first fruits; the ingathering is at the end of the year, or in the last ages of the Christian church, as it is represented, Rev. xiv. 14—16. and will probably as much exceed what was in the first ages of the Christian church, though that filled the Roman empire, as that exceeded all that had been before, under the Old Testament, confined only to the land of Judea.

The great danger of not appearing openly to acknowledge, rejoice in, and promote that great work of God, in bringing in that glorious harvest, is represented in Zech. xiv. 16, 17, 18, 19. "And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left, of all the nations which came against Jerusalem, shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of Hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusa-

lem, to worship the King, the Lord of Hosts, even upon them shall be no rain. And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, that have no rain; there shall be the plague, wherewith the Lord will smite the heathen that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all nations that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles." It is evident by all the context, that the glorious day of the church of God in the latter ages of the world, is the time spoken of. The *feast of tabernacles* here seems to signify that glorious spiritual feast which God shall then make for his church, the same that is spoken of, Isa. xxv. 6. and the great spiritual rejoicings of God's people at that time. There were three great feasts in Israel, at which all the males were appointed to go up to Jerusalem: the feast of the *passover*, and the feast of the *first-fruits* or the feast of Pentecost; and the feast of *ingathering*, at the end of the year, or the feast of *tabernacles*. In the first of these, viz. *the feast of the passover*, was represented the *purchase* of redemption by Jesus Christ; for the Paschal lamb was slain at the time of that feast. The other two that followed it were to represent the two great seasons of the *application* of the purchased redemption. In the former of them, viz. *the feast of the first fruits*, which was called the feast of Pentecost, was represented that time of the outpouring of the Spirit in the first ages of the Christian church, for the bringing in the *first-fruits* of Christ's redemption, which began at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. The other, which was the feast of *ingathering*, at the end of the year—which the children of Israel were appointed to keep on occasion of their gathering in their corn and their wine, and all the fruit of their land, and was called the *feast of tabernacles*—represented the other more joyful and glorious season of the application of Christ's redemption, which is to be in the latter days. Then will be the great day of ingathering of the elect, the proper and appointed time of gathering in God's fruits, when the angel of the covenant shall thrust in his sickle, and gather the harvest of the earth; and the clusters of the vine of the earth shall also be gathered.—This was upon many accounts the greatest feast of the three. There were much greater tokens of rejoicings in this feast than any other. The people then dwelt in booths of green boughs, and were commanded to take boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook, and to rejoice before the Lord their God. This represents the flourishing, beautiful, pleasant state of the church, rejoicing in God's grace and love, and triumphing over all her enemies. The tabernacle of God was first set up among the children of Israel, at the time of the *feast of tabernacles*: but, in that glorious time of the Christian church,

God will above all other times set up his tabernacle amongst men, Rev. xxi. 3. "And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, The tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.

The world is supposed to have been created about the time of year wherein the *feast of tabernacles* was appointed; so, in that glorious time, God will create a new heaven and a new earth. The temple of Solomon was dedicated at the time of the *feast of tabernacles*, when God descended in a pillar of cloud, and dwelt in the temple; so, at this happy time, the temple of God shall be gloriously built up in the world, and God shall in a wonderful manner come down from heaven to dwell with his church. Christ is supposed to have been born at the feast of tabernacles; so, at the commencement of that glorious day, Christ shall be born; then, above all other times, shall "the woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, that is in travail, and pained to be delivered, bring forth her son to rule all nations," Rev. xii. The *feast of tabernacles* was the last feast that Israel had in the whole year, before the face of the earth was destroyed by the winter; presently after the rejoicings of that feast were past, a tempestuous season began, Acts xxvii. 9. "Sailing was now dangerous, because the feast was now already past." So this great feast of the Christian church will be the last feast she shall have on earth; soon after it is past, this lower world will be destroyed. At the *feast of tabernacles*, Israel left their houses to dwell in booths or green tents; which signifies the great weanedness of God's people from the world, as pilgrims and strangers on the earth, and their great joy therein. Israel were prepared for the *feast of tabernacles* by the *feast of trumpets*, and the day of atonement, both in the same month; so, way shall be made for the joy of the church of God, in its glorious state on earth, by the extraordinary preaching of the gospel, deep repentance and humiliation for past sins, and for the great and long-continued deadness and carnality of the visible church. Christ, at the great *feast of tabernacles*, stood in Jerusalem, and *cried*, *saying*, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink: He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living waters:" signifying the extraordinary freedom and riches of divine grace towards sinners at that day, and the extraordinary measures of the Holy Spirit that shall be then given: agreeable to Rev. xxi. 6. and xxii. 17.

It is threatened (Zech. xiv.) that those who at that time shall not come to keep this feast, i. e. that shall not acknowledge God's glorious works, praise his name, and rejoice with his people—but who should stand at a distance, as unbelieving and disaffected—*upon them shall be no rain*; they shall have no

share in the shower of divine blessing that shall then descend on the earth, the spiritual rain spoken of, Isa xliv. 3. but God would give them over to hardness of heart and blindness of mind. The curse is denounced against such, in a manner still more awful, ver. 12. "And this shall be the plague wherewith the Lord shall smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem: Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth." Here also, in all probability, is intended a spiritual judgment, or a plague and curse from God upon the soul, rather than upon the body; that such persons, who at that time shall oppose God's people in his work, shall in an extraordinary manner be given over to a state of spiritual death and ruin, that they shall remarkably appear dead while alive, and shall be as walking rotten corpses while they go about amongst men. The great danger of not joining with God's people at that glorious day is also represented, Isa. lx. 12. "For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted.

Most of the great temporal deliverances wrought for Israel of old, were typical of the great spiritual works of God for the salvation of souls, and the deliverance and prosperity of his church, in gospel days; and especially they represented that greatest of all deliverances of God's church in the latter days, which is above all others the proper season of actual redemption of men's souls. But it may be observed, that if any appeared to oppose God's work in those great temporal deliverances; or if there were any of his professing people, who on such occasions lay still, stood at a distance, or did not arise and acknowledge God in his work, and appear to promote it; it was what in a remarkable manner incensed God's anger, and brought his curse upon such persons.—When God wrought that great work of bringing the children of Israel out of Egypt, (which was a type of God's delivering his church out of the spiritual Egypt at the time of the fall of Antichrist, as is evident by Rev. xi. 8. and xv. 3.) how highly did he resent it, when the Amalekites appeared as opposers in that affair? and how dreadfully did he curse them for it? Exod. xvii. 14—16. "And the Lord said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua; for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovah-nissi. For he said, Because the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation." And accordingly we find that God remembered it a long time after, 1 Sam. xv. 3. And how highly did God resent it in the Moabites and Ammonites, that they did not lend a helping hand, and encourage and promote the

affair? Deut. xxiii. 3, 4. "An Amorite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord; even to their tenth generation. shall they not enter into the congregation of the Lord for ever. Because they met you not with bread and with water in the way, when ye came forth out of Egypt." And how were the children of Reuben, and the children of Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh threatened, if they did not go and help their brethren in their wars against the Canaanites? Num. xxxii. 20—23. "And Moses said unto them, if ye will do this thing, if ye will go armed before the Lord to war, and will go all of you armed over Jordan before the Lord, until he hath driven out his enemies from before him, and the land be subdued before the Lord, then afterward ye shall return, and be guiltless before the Lord and before Israel; and this land shall be your possession before the Lord. But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the Lord; and be sure your sin will find you out."

That was a glorious work which God wrought for Israel, when he delivered them from the Canaanites, by the hand of Deborah and Barak. Almost every thing about it shewed a remarkable hand of God. It was a prophetess, one immediately inspired by God, that called the people to the battle, and conducted them in the whole affair. The people seem to have been miraculously animated and encouraged in the matter, when they willingly offered themselves, and gathered together to the battle; they jeoparded their lives in the high places of the field, without being pressed or hired, when one would have thought they should have but little courage for such an undertaking. For what could a number of poor, weak, defenceless slaves do, without *a shield or spear to be seen among forty thousand of them*, to go against a great prince with his mighty host and nine hundred chariots of iron? And the success wonderfully shewed the hand of God; which makes Deborah exultingly to say, Judges v. 31. "O my soul, thou hast trodden down strength!" Christ with his heavenly host was engaged in that battle; and therefore it is said, ver. 20, "They fought from heaven, the stars in their courses fought against Sisera." The work of God therefore in this victory and deliverance which Christ and his host wrought for Israel, was a type of what he will accomplish for his church in that great last conflict of the church with her open enemies, that shall introduce the church's latter-day glory; as appears by Rev. xvi. 16. (speaking of that great battle,) "And he gathered them together into a place, called in the Hebrew tongue, Armageddon, i. e. the mountain of Megiddo; alluding as is supposed by expositors, to the place where the battle was fought with the host of Sisera, Judges v. 19. "The kings came and fought the kings of Canaan, in Taanach, by the waters of Megiddo." Which can signify nothing else than that this

battle, which Christ and his church shall have with their enemies, is the antitype of the battle that was fought there. But what a dreadful curse from Christ did some of God's professing people, Israel, bring upon themselves, by lying still at that time, and not putting to an helping hand; Judges v. 23. "Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the Lord, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty." The angel of the Lord was the captain of the host; he that had led Israel, and fought for them in that battle, who is very often called *the angel of the Lord*, in scripture; the same that appeared to Joshua with a sword drawn in his hand, and told him that he was *come as the captain of the host of the Lord:* and the same glorious captain who is represented as leading forth his hosts to that battle, of which this was the type, Rev. xix. 11, &c. It seems the inhabitants of Meroz were unbelieving concerning this great work; they would not hearken to Deborah's pretences, nor did it enter into them that such a poor defenceless company should ever prevail against those that were so mighty. They did not acknowledge the hand of God, and therefore stood at a distance, and did nothing to promote the work; but what a bitter curse from God did they bring upon themselves by it;—It is very probable that one great reason why the inhabitants of Meroz were so unbelieving concerning this work, was, that they argued *a priori;* they did not like the beginning of it, it being a woman that first led the way, and had the chief conduct in the affair; nor could they believe that such despicable instruments, as a company of unarmed slaves, were ever like to effect so great a thing; and pride and unbelief wrought together, in not being willing to follow Deborah to the battle.

It was another glorious work of God that he wrought for Israel, in the victory that was obtained by Gideon over the Midianites and Amalekites, and the children of the east, when they came up against Israel like grasshoppers, a multitude that could not be numbered. This also was a remarkable type of the victory of Christ and his church over his enemies, by the pouring out of the spirit with the preached gospel; as is evident by the manner in which Gideon was immediately directed of God, which was not by human sword or bow, but by blowing of trumpets, and by lights in earthen vessels. We read that on this occasion, Gideon called the people together to help in this great affair; and that accordingly great numbers resorted to him, and came to the help of the Lord, Judges vii. 23, 24. But the inhabitants of Succoth and Penuel were unbelieving, and would not acknowledge the hand of God in that work, though it was so great and wonderful, nor would they join to promote it. Gideon desired their help, when he

was pursuing after Zeba and Zalmunna; but they despised his pretences, and his confidence of the Lord being on his side, to deliver those two great princes into the hands of such a despicable company as he and his three hundred men, and would not own the work of God, nor afford Gideon any assistance. God proceeded in this work in a way that was exceeding cross to their pride. And they also refused to own the work, because they argued *a priori;* they could not believe that God would do such great things by such a despicable instrument, one of such a poor, mean family in Manasseh, and he the least in his father's house; and the company that was with him appeared very wretched, being but three hundred men, and they weak and faint. But we see how they suffered for their folly, in not acknowledging and appearing to promote this work of God: Gideon, when he returned from the victory "took them, and taught them with the briers and thorns of the wilderness, and beat down the tower of Penuel," (he brought down their pride and their false confidence) "and slew the men of the city," Judg. viii. This in all probability Gideon did, as moved and directed by the angel of the Lord, that is Christ, who first called him, and sent him forth in this battle, and instructed and directed him in the whole affair.

The return of the ark of God to dwell in Zion, in the midst of the land of Israel, after it had been long absent—first in the land of the Philistines, and then in Kirjath-jearim, in the utmost borders of the land—strikingly represented the return of God to a professing people, in the spiritual tokens of his presence after long absence from them. The ark ascending up into a mountain, typified Christ's ascension into heaven. It is evident by the Psalms that were penned on that occasion, especially the 68th Psalm, that the exceeding rejoicings of Israel on that occasion represented the joy of the church of Christ on his returning to it, after it has been in a low and dark state, to revive his work, bringing his people back, as it were, "from Bashan, and from the depth of the sea;" scattering their spiritual enemies, and causing that "though they had lien among the pots, yet they should be as the wings of a dove, covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold;" and giving the blessed tokens of his presence in his house, that his people may "see the goings of God their king in the sanctuary." The gifts which David, with such royal bounty distributed amongst the people on that occasion, (2 Sam. vi. 18, 19. and 1 Chron. xvi. 2, 3.) represent spiritual blessings that Christ liberally sends down on his church, by the outpourings of his Spirit. See Psalm lxviii. 1, 3, 13, 18—24. And we have an account how that all the people, from Shihor of Egypt, even unto the entering in of Hemath,

gathered together, and appeared to join and assist in that great affair; and that all Israel "brought up the ark of the covenant of the Lord, with shouting, and with sound of the cornet, and with trumpets, and with cymbals, making a noise with psalteries and harps," 1 Chron. xiii. 2, 5. and xv. 28. And not only the men, but the women of Israel, the daughters of Zion appeared, as publicly joining in the praises and rejoicings on that occasion, 2 Sam. vi. 19. But we read of one of David's wives, even Michal, Saul's daughter, whose heart was not engaged in the affair, and did not appear with others to rejoice and praise God on this occasion, but kept away, and stood at a distance, as disaffected, and disliking the management. She despised and ridiculed the transports and extraordinary manifestations of joy; and the curse that she brought upon herself by it was that of being barren to the day of her death. Let this be a warning to us, let us take heed, in this day of the bringing up of the ark of God, that, while we are in visibility and profession the spouse of the spiritual David, we do not shew ourselves to be indeed the children of false-hearted and rebellious Saul, by our standing aloof, and our not joining in the joy and praises of the day, disliking and despising the joys and affections of God's people because they are so high in degree, and so bring the curse of perpetual barrenness upon our souls.

Let us take heed that we be not like the son of the bond-woman, born after the flesh, that persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, and mocked at the feasting and rejoicings that were made for Isaac when he was weaned; lest we should be cast out of the family of Abraham, as he was, Gen. xxi. 8, 9. That affair contained spiritual mysteries, and was typical of things that come to pass in these days of the gospel; as is evident by the apostle's testimony, Gal. iv. 22, &c. And particularly it seems to have been typical of two things:

First, The weaning of the church from its milk of carnal ordinances, ceremonies, shadows and beggarly elements, upon the coming of Christ, and pouring out of the Spirit in the days of the apostles. The church of Christ, in the times of the Old Testament, was in its minority, even as a babe; and the apostle tells us that babes must be fed with milk, and not with strong meat: but when God weaned his church from these carnal ordinances, on the ceasing of the legal dispensation, a glorious gospel feast was provided for souls, and God fed his people with spiritual dainties, filled them with the Spirit, and gave them joy in the Holy Ghost. Ishmael in mocking at the time of Isaac's feast, by the apostle's testimony, represented the carnal Jews, the children of the literal Jerusalem, who, when they beheld the rejoicings of Christians in their spiritual and evangelical privileges, were filled with envy, deriding, con-

tradicting and blaspheming, (Acts ii. 13. and chap. xiii. 45. and xviii. 6.) and therefore were cast out of the family of Abraham, and out of the land of Canaan, to wander through the earth.

Secondly, This weaning of Isaac seems also to represent the conversion of sinners, which is several times represented in scripture by the weaning of a child; as in Psalm cxxxi. and Isa. xxviii. 9: because in conversion the soul is weaned from the enjoyments of the world, which are as it were the breast of our mother earth; and is also weaned from the covenant of our first parents, which we as naturally hang upon, as a child on its mother's breast. And the great feast that Abraham made on that occasion represents the spiritual feast, the heavenly privileges, and holy joys and comforts, which God gives to souls at their conversion. Now is a time when God in a remarkable manner is bestowing the blessings of such a feast: Let every one take heed that he do not now shew himself to be the son of the bond-woman, and born after the flesh, by standing and deriding, with mocking Ishmael; lest they be cast out as he was, and it be said concerning them, "The sons of the bond-woman shall not be heirs with the sons of the free-woman." Do not let us stumble at these things, because they are so great and extraordinary; for "if we have run with the footmen, and they have wearied *us*, how shall we contend with horses?" There is doubtless a time coming when God will accomplish things vastly greater and more extraordinary than these.

And that we may be warned not to continue doubting and unbelieving concerning this work, because of the extraordinary degree of it, and the suddenness and swiftness of the accomplishment of the great things that pertain to it; let us consider the example of the unbelieving Lord in Samaria, who could not believe so extraordinary a work of God to be accomplished so suddenly as was declared to him. The prophet Elisha foretold that the great famine in Samaria should very suddenly, even in one day, be turned into an extraordinary plenty; but the work was too great and too sudden for him to believe: says he, "If the Lord should make windows in heaven, might this thing be?" And the curse that he brought upon himself by it was that he saw it with his eyes, and did not eat thereof, but miserably perished, and was trodden down as the mire of the streets, when others were feasting and rejoicing, 2 Kings vii.

When God redeemed his people from their Babylonish captivity, and they rebuilt Jerusalem, it was, as is universally owned, a remarkable type of the spiritual redemption of God's church; and particularly of the great deliverance of the Christian church from spiritual Babylon, and their rebuilding the spiritual Jerusalem, in the latter days; and therefore they are often spoken of as one by the prophets. And this probably

was the main reason that it was so ordered in Providence, and particularly noted in scripture, that the children of Israel on that occasion, kept the greatest *feast of tabernacles* that ever had been kept in Israel since the days of Joshua, when the people were first settled in Canaan. (Neh. viii. 16, 17.) For at that time happened that restoration of Israel, which had the greatest resemblance of that great restoration of the church of God, of which the *feast of tabernacles* was the type, of any that had been since Joshua first brought the people out of the wilderness, and settled them in the good land. But we read of some that opposed the Jews in that affair, weakened their hands, ridiculed God's people, the instruments employed in that work, despised their hopes, and made as though their confidence was little more than a shadow, and would utterly fail them: "What do these feeble Jews? (say they) will they fortify themselves? will they sacrifice? will they make an end in a day? will they revive the stones out of the heaps of the rubbish which are burnt? Even that which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall." Let not us be in any measure like them, lest it be said to us, as Nehemiah said to them, Neh. ii. 20. "We his servants will arise and build; but you have no portion, nor right, nor memorial in Jerusalem." And lest we bring Nehemiah's imprecations upon us, chap. iv. 5. "Cover not their iniquities, and let not their sin be blotted out from before thee; for they have provoked thee to anger before the builders."

As persons will greatly expose themselves to the curse of God, by opposing, or standing at a distance, and keeping silence at such a time as this; so for persons to arise, and readily to acknowledge God, and honour him in such a work, and cheerfully and vigorously to exert themselves to promote it, will be to put themselves much in the way of the divine blessing. What a mark of honour does God put upon those in Israel, that willingly offered themselves, and came to the help of the Lord against the mighty, when the angel of the Lord led forth his armies, and they fought from heaven against Sisera? Judg. v. 2, 9, 14—18. And what a great blessing is pronounced on Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, for her appearing on the Lord's side, and for what she did to promote that work? "Blessed above women shall Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite be, blessed shall she be above women in the tent." And what a blessing is pronounced on those which shall have any hand in the destruction of Babylon, which was the head city of the kingdom of Satan, and of the enemies of the church of God? Psal. cxxxvii. 9. "Happy shall he be that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones." What a particular and honourable notice is taken, in the records of God's word, of those that arose and appeared as David's

helpers, to introduce him into the kingdom of Israel? 1 Chron. xii. The host of those who thus came to the help of the Lord, in that glorious revolution in Israel, by which the kingdom of that great type of the Messiah was set up in Israel, is compared to the host of God, (ver. 22.) "At that time, day by day, there came to David to help him, until it was a great host, like the host of God." And doubtless it was intended to be a type of the host that shall appear with the spiritual David, as his helpers, when he shall come to set up his kingdom in the world; the same host that we read of, Rev. xiv. 14. The Spirit of God then pronounced a special blessing on David's helpers, as co-workers with God, ver. 18. "Then the spirit came upon Amasai, who was chief of the captains, and he said, Thine are we, David, and on thy side, thou son of Jesse: Peace, peace be unto thee, and peace be to thine helpers; for thy God helpeth thee." So we may conclude, that God will much more give his blessing to such as come to the help of the Lord, when he sets his own dear Son as king on his holy hill of Zion. They shall be received by Christ, and he will put peculiar honour upon them, as David did on those his helpers; as we have an account in the following words, ver. 18. "Then David received them, and made them captains of the band." It is particularly noted of those that came to David to Hebron, ready armed to the war, to turn the kingdom of Saul to him, according to the word of the Lord, that "they were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do," ver. 23 and 32. Wherein they differed from the Pharisees and other Jews, who did not come to the help of the Lord, at the time that the great Son of David appeared to set up his kingdom in the world. These Christ condemns, because they had not "understanding of those times," Luke xii. 56. "Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky, and of the earth; but how is it that ye do not discern these times?" So it will always be, when Christ remarkably appears on earth, on a design of setting up his kingdom here; many will not understand the times, nor what Israel ought to do, and so will not come to turn about the kingdom to David.

The favourable notice that God will take of such as appear to promote the work of God, at such a time as this, may also be argued from such a very particular notice being taken in the sacred records, of those that helped in rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem, upon the return from the Babylonish captivity. Nehem. chap. iii.

SECT. IV.

The Obligations of Rulers, Ministers, and all Sorts, to promote this Work.

At such a time as this, when God is setting his king on his holy hill of Zion, or establishing his dominion, or shewing forth his regal glory from thence, he expects that his visible people, without exception, should openly appear to acknowledge him in such a work, and bow before him, and join with him. But especially does he expect this of civil *rulers:* God's eye is especially upon them, to see how they behave themselves on such occasion. When a new king comes to the throne, if he comes from abroad, and enters into his kingdom, and makes his solemn entry into the royal city, it is expected that all sorts should acknowledge him; but above all others is it expected that the great men, and public officers of the nation, should then make their appearance, and attend on their sovereign, with suitable congratulations, and manifestations of respect and loyalty. If such as these stand at a distance at such a time, it will be much more noticed; and will awaken the prince's jealousy and displeasure much more than such a behaviour in the common people. And thus it is, when that eternal Son of God, and heir of the world—by whom kings reign, and princes decree justice, and whom his Father has appointed to be king of kings—comes as it were from far, and in the spiritual tokens of his presence enters into the royal city Zion. God has his eye at such a time, especially, upon these princes, nobles and judges of the earth, spoken of Prov. viii. 16. to see how they behave themselves, whether they bow to him, who is made the head of all principality and power. This is evident by Psal. ii. 6, 7, 10—12. "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.—Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little." There seems to be in the words an allusion to a new king coming to the throne, and making his solemn entry into the royal city, when it is expected that all, especially men in public office and authority, should manifest their loyalty, by some open and visible tokens of respect, *by the way*, as he passes along; and those that refuse or neglect it, are in danger of being immediately struck down, and perishing *from the way*, by which the king goes in solemn procession

The day wherein God, in an eminent manner, sends forth the rod of Christ's strength out of Zion, that he may rule in the midst of his enemies, the day of his power wherein his people shall be made willing, is also eminently a day of his wrath, especially to such rulers as oppose him, or will not bow to him. It will prove a day wherein he "shall strike through kings and fill the places with the dead bodies, and wound the heads over many countries," Psal. cx. And thus it is, that when the Son of God "girds his sword upon his thigh, with his glory and his majesty, and in his majesty rides prosperously, because of truth, meekness, and righteousness, his right hand teaches him terrible things." They were the princes of Succoth especially who suffered punishment, when the inhabitants of that city refused to come to the help of the Lord. When Gideon was pursuing after Zebah and Zalmunna, we read that Gideon took the elders of the city and thorns of the wilderness, and briers, and with them he taught the men of Succoth. It is especially noticed, that the rulers and chief men of Israel, were called upon to assist in the affair of bringing up the ark of God; they were chiefly consulted, and were principal in the management of the affair, 1 Chron. xiii. 1. "And David consulted with the captains of thousands and hundreds, and with every leader." And chap. xv. 25. "So David and the elders of Israel, and the captains over thousands, went to bring up the ark of the covenant of the Lord, out of the house of Obed-Edom, with joy." So, 2 Sam. vi. 1. And so it was when the ark was brought into the temple, (1 Kings viii. 1, 3. and 2 Chron. v. 2, 4.)

And as rulers by neglecting their duty at such a time, will especially expose themselves to God's great displeasure; so by fully acknowledging God in such a work, and by cheerfully and vigorously exerting themselves to promote it, they will especially be in the way of receiving peculiar honours and rewards at God's hands. It is noted of the princes of Israel, that they especially appeared to honour God with their princely offering, on occasion of setting up the tabernacle of God in the congregation of Israel. I have observed already that this was done at the time of the feast of tabernacles, and was a type of the tabernacle of God being with men, and his dwelling with men in the latter days. And with what abundant particularity is it noted of each prince, how much he offered to God on that occasion, for their everlasting honour, in the 7th chapter of Numbers? And so, with how much favour and honour does the Spirit of God take notice of those princes in Israel, who came to the help of the Lord, in the war against Sisera? Judg. v. 9. "My heart is towards the governors of Israel, that offered themselves willingly among the people." And, (ver. 14.) Out of Machir came down governors. (ver. 15.)

"And the princes of Issachar were with Deborah." And in the account we have of rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem, Nehem. iii. it is particularly noted what a hand one and another of the rulers had in this affair; such a part of the wall was repaired by the ruler of the half part of Jerusalem, and such a part by the ruler of the other half part of Jerusalem, and such a part by the ruler of part of Beth-haccerem, and such a part by the ruler of part of Mizpah, and such a part by the ruler of the half part of Bethzur; and such a part by the ruler of Mizpah, ver. 9—19. And there it is particularly noted of the rulers of one of the cities, that they put not their necks to the work of the Lord, though the common people did; and they are stigmatized for it in the sacred records, to their everlasting reproach, (ver. 5.) "And next unto them the Tekoites repaired; but their nobles put not their necks to the work of the Lord." So the Spirit of God, with special honour, takes notice of princes and rulers of several tribes, who assisted in bringing up the ark. Psal. lxviii. 27.

And I humbly desire it may be considered, whether we have not reason to fear, that God is provoked with this land, because no more notice has been taken of the late glorious work by the civil authority; that no more has been done by them as a public acknowledgment of God in this work, and no more improvement of their authority to promote it. This might have been done, either by appointing a day of public thanksgiving to God for so unspeakable a mercy, or a day of fasting and prayer, to humble ourselves before God for our past deadness and unprofitableness under the means of grace, and to seek the continuance and increase of the tokens of his presence. Can it be pleasing to God, that the civil authority have not so much as entered upon any public consultation, what should be done to advance the present revival of religion, and great reformation that is begun in the land? Is there not danger that such a behaviour at such a time, will be interpreted by God, as a denial of Christ? If but a new governor comes into a province how much is there done, especially by those who are in authority, to put honour upon him? They arise, appear publicly, and go forth to meet, to address, and congratulate him, and with great expense to attend and aid him. If the authority of the province, on such an occasion, should all sit still, and say and do nothing, and take no notice of the arrival of their new governor, would there not be dangor of its being interpreted by him and his prince that sent him, as a denial of his authority, or a refusing to receive and honour him as their governor? And shall the head of the angels, and lord of the universe, come down from heaven, in so wonderful a manner, into the land; and shall all stand at a distance, and be silent and inactive on such an occasion? I would

humbly recommend it to our rulers to consider whether God does not now say to them, "Be wise now, ye rulers; be instructed, ye judges of New England; kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way."

It is prophesied, Zech. xii. 8. that in the glorious day of the Christian church, the house of David, or the rulers in God's "Israel, shall be as God, as the angel of the Lord, before his people." But how can such rulers expect to have any share in this glorious promise, who do not so much as openly acknowledge God in the work of that Spirit, by whom the glory of that day is to be accomplished? The days are coming, when the saints shall reign on earth, and all dominion and authority shall be given into their hands: but, if our rulers would partake of this honour, they ought, at such a day as this, to bring their glory and honour into the spiritual Jerusalem, agreeable to Rev. xxi. 24.

But, above all others, is God's eye upon the ministers of the gospel, as expecting of them, that they should arise, acknowledge, and honour him in such a work as this, and do their utmost to encourage and promote it. For this is the very business to which they are called and devoted: it is the office to which they are appointed, as co-workers with Christ. They are his ambassadors and instruments, to awaken and convert sinners, and establish, build up and comfort saints; it is the business they have been solemnly charged with, before God, angels and men, and to which they have given up themselves by the most sacred vows. These especially are the officers of Christ's kingdom, who, above all other men upon earth, represent his person; into whose hands Christ has committed the sacred oracles, holy ordinances, and all his appointed means of grace, to be administered by them. They are the stewards of his household, into whose hands he has committed its provision; the immortal souls of men are committed to them, as a flock of sheep are committed to the care of a shepherd, or as a master commits a treasure to the care of a servant, of which he must give an account. It is expected of them, above all others, that they should have understanding of the times, and know what Israel ought to do; for it is their business to acquaint themselves with things pertaining to the kingdom of God, and to teach and enlighten others in the same. We who are employed in the sacred work of the gospel ministry, are the watchmen over the city, to whom God has committed the keys of the gates of Zion; and if, when the rightful king of Zion comes to deliver his people from the enemy that oppresses them, we refuse to open the gates to him, how greatly shall we expose onrselves to his wrath? We are appointed to be the captains of the host in this war; and if a general will highly resent it in a private soldier, if he refuses

to follow him when his banner is displayed, and his trumpet blown; how much more will he resent it in the officers of his army? The work of the gospel-ministry, consisting in the administration of God's word and ordinances, is the principal means that God has appointed for carrying on his work on the souls of men; and it is his revealed will, that whenever that glorious revival of religion, and reformation of the world, so often spoken of in his word, is accomplished, it should be principally by the labours of his ministers. Therefore, how heinous will it be in the sight of God, if, when a work of that nature is begun, we appear unbelieving, slow, backward and disaffected? There was no sort of persons among the Jews treated with such manifestations of God's great displeasure, and severe indignation, for not acknowledging Christ. and the work of his Spirit, in the days of Christ and his apostles, as the ministers of religion. See how Christ deals with them for it, Matt. xxiii. With what gentleness did Christ treat publicans and harlots, in comparison of them?

When the tabernacle was erected in the camp of Israel, and God came down from heaven to dwell in it, the priests were above all others concerned, and busily employed in the solemn transactions of that occasion, Levit. viii. and ix. And so it was at the time of the dedication of the temple by Solomon, (1 Kings viii. and 2 Chron. v. vi. and vii.) which was at the time of the feast of tabernacles, the same as when the tabernacle was erected in the wilderness. And the Levites were primarily and most immediately concerned in bringing up the ark into Mount Zion; the business properly belonged to them, and the ark was carried upon their shoulders, 1 Chron. xv. 2. "Then David said, none ought to carry the ark of God but the Levites; for them hath the Lord chosen to carry the ark of God, and to minister unto him for ever." And (ver. 11, 12.) "And David called for Zadok and Abiathar the priests, and for the Levites, for Uriel, Asaiah, and Joel, Shemaiah, and Eliel, and Amminadab, and said unto them, Ye are the chief of the fathers of the Levites; sanctify yourselves, both ye and your brethren, that ye may bring up the ark of the Lord God of Israel, unto the place that I have prepared for it." So we have an account that the priests led the way in rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem, after the Babylonish captivity, Neh. iii.

Though ministers preach never so good doctrine, and be never so painful and laborious in their work, yet if they shew to their people that they are not well affected to this work, but are doubtful and suspicious of it, they will be very likely to do their people a great deal more hurt than good. For the very fame of such a great and extraordinary work of God, if their people were suffered to believe it to be his work, and the example of other towns, together with what preaching

they might hear occasionally, would be likely to have a much greater influence upon the minds of their people to awaken and animate them in religion, than all other labours with them. Besides, their ministers' opinion will not only beget in them a suspicion of the work they hear of abroad, whereby the mighty hand of God that appears in it, loses its influence upon their minds: but it will also tend to create a suspicion of every thing of the like nature that shall appear among themselves, as being something of the same distemper that is become so epidemical in the land. And what is this, in effect, but to create a suspicion of all vital religion, and to put the people upon talking against and discouraging it, wherever it appears, and knocking it on the head as fast as it rises. We, who are ministers, by looking on this work from year to year with a displeased countenance, shall effectually keep the sheep from their pasture, instead of doing the part of shepherds by feeding them; and our people had a great deal better be without any settled minister at all, at such a day as this.

We who are in this sacred office had need to take heed what we do, and how we behave ourselves at this time: a less thing in a *minister* will hinder the work of God, than in *others*. If we are very silent, or say but little about the work, in our public prayers and preaching, or seem carefully to avoid speaking of it in our conversation, it will be interpreted by our people, that we who are their guides, to whom they are to have their eye for spiritual instruction, are suspicious of it; and this will tend to raise the same suspicions in them; and so the forementioned consequences will follow. And if we really hinder and stand in the way of the work of God, whose business above all others it is to promote it, how can we expect to partake of the glorious benefits of it? And, by keeping others from the benefit, we shall keep them out of heaven; therefore those awful words of Christ to the Jewish teachers, should be considered by us, Matt. xxiii. 13. "Woe unto you, for you shut up the kingdom of heaven;—for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering, to go in." If we keep the sheep from their pasture, how shall we answer it to the great shepherd, who has bought the flock with his precious blood, and has committed the care of them to us? I would humbly desire of every minister that has thus long remained disaffected to this work, and has had contemptible thoughts of it, to consider whether he has not hitherto been like Michal, without any child, or at least in a great measure barren and unsuccessful in his work: I pray God it may not be a perpetual barrenness, as hers was.

The times of Christ's remarkably appearing in behalf of his church, to revive religion, and advance his kingdom in the world, are often spoken of in the prophecies of scrip-

ture, as times wherein he will remarkably execute judgments on such ministers or shepherds as do not feed the flock, but hinder their being fed, and so will deliver his flock from them. (Jer. xxiii. throughout, and Ezek. xxxiv. throughout, and Zech. x. 3. and Isa. lvi. 7, 8, 9, &c. I observed before, that Christ's solemn, magnificent entry into Jerusalem, seems to be designed as a representation of his glorious coming into his church, the spiritual Jerusalem; and therefore it is worthy to be noted, to our present purpose, that Christ at that time cast out all them who sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves; signifying, that, when he should come to set up his kingdom on earth, he would cast out those out of his house, who, instead of being faithful ministers, officiated there for worldly gain. Not that I determine, that all ministers who are suspicious of this work, do so; but I mention these things to shew why it is to be expected, that a time of a glorious outpouring of the Spirit of God to revive religion, will be a time of remarkable judgments on those ministers who do not serve the end of their ministry.

The example of the unbelieving lord in Samaria should especially be for the warning of ministers and rulers. At the time when God turned an extreme famine into great plenty, by a wonderful work of his, the king appointed this lord to have the charge of the gate of the city; where he saw the common people, in multitudes, entering with great joy and gladness, loaded with provision, to feed and feast their almost famished bodies; but he himself, though he saw it with his eyes, never had one taste of it, but, being weak with famine, sunk down in the crowd, and was trodden to death, as a punishment of God for his not giving credit to that great and wonderful work of God, whem sufficiently manifested to him to require his belief.—Ministers are those whom the king of the church has appointed to have the charge of the gate at which his people enter into the kingdom of heaven, there to be entertained and satisfied with an eternal feast, i. e. ministers have the charge of the house of God, which is the gate of heaven.

They should especially take heed of a spirit of envy towards other ministers, whom God is pleased to use for carrying on this work more than they; and that they do not from such a spirit, reproach some preachers who have the true spirit, as though they were influenced by a false spirit—or were bereft of reason, were mad, and proud, false pretenders, and deserved to be put in prison or the stocks, as disturbers of the peace—least they expose themselves to the curse of Shemaiah, the Nehelamite, who envied the prophet Jeremiah.

and in this manner reviled him, in his letter to Zephaniah the priest, Jer. xxix. 26, 27. "The Lord hath made thee priest in the stead of Jehoiada the priest, that ye should be officers in the house of the Lord, for every man that is mad, and maketh himself a prophet, that thou shouldst put him in prison, and in the stocks. Now therefore, why hast thou not reproved Jeremiah of Anathoth, which maketh himself a prophet to you?" His curse is denounced in the 32d verse, "Therefore thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will punish Shemaiah the Nehelamite, and his seed; he shall not have a man to dwell among his people, neither shall he behold the good that I will do for my people, saith the Lord, because he hath taught rebellion against the Lord." All superiors or elders should take heed, that at this day they be not like the elder brother, who could not bear that the prodigal should be sumptuously entertained, and would not join in the joy of the feast. He was like Michal, Saul's daughter, offended at the music and dancing that he heard; the transports of joy displeased him; it seemed to him to be an unseemly and unseasonable noise; and therefore stood at a distance, sullen and much offended, and full of invectives against the young prodigal.

It is our wisest and best way, fully, and without reluctance, to bow to the great God in this work, and to be entirely resigned to him, with respect to the manner in which he carries it on, and the instruments he is pleased to use. Let us not shew ourselves out of humour, and sullenly refuse to acknowledge the work in its full glory, because we have not had so great a hand in promoting it, or have not shared so largely in its blessings as some others. Let us not refuse to give all that honour which belongs to others as instruments, because they are young, or are upon other accounts much inferior to ourselves and others; and may appear to us very unworthy that God should put so much honour upon them. When God comes to accomplish any great work for his church, and for the advancement of the kingdom of his Son, he always fulfils that scripture, Isa. ii. 17. "And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of man shall be made low, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day." If God has a design of carrying on this work, every one, whether he be great or small, must either bow to it, or be broken before it. It may be expected that God's hand will be upon every thing that is high and stiff, and strong in opposition; as in Isa. ii. 12—15. "For the day of the Lord of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up, and he shall be brought low; and upon all the cedars of Lebanon, that are high and lifted up, and upon all the oaks of Bashan, and upon all the high mountains, and upon all the hills that are lifted up, and upon every high tower, and upon every fenced wall."

Not only magistrates and ministers, but *every living soul*, is now obliged to arise and acknowledge God in this work, and put to his hand to promote it, as they would not expose themselves to God's curse. All sorts of persons throughout the whole congregation of Israel, great and small, rich and poor, men and women, helped to build the tabernacle in the wilderness; some in one way, others in another; each one according to his capacity: every one whose heart stirred him up, and every one whom his spirit made willing; all sorts contributed and all sorts were employed in that affair, in labours of their hands, both men and women. Some brought gold and silver, others blue, purple and scarlet, and fine linen; others offered an offering of brass; others, with whom was found shittim-wood, brought it an offering to the Lord; the rulers brought onyx-stones, and spice and oil; and some brought goats' hair, some rams' skins, and others badgers' skins. (See Exod. xxxv. 20, &c.) And we are told, ver. 29. "The children of Israel brought a willing offering unto the Lord, every man and woman, whose heart made them willing." And thus it ought to be in this day of building the tabernacle of God; with such a willing and cheerful heart ought every man, woman, and child, to do something to promote this work; those who have not onyx-stones, or are not able to bring gold or silver, yet may bring goats' hair.

As all sorts of persons were employed in building the tabernacle in the wilderness, so the whole congregation of Israel were called together to set up the tabernacle in Shiloh, after they came into Canaan, Josh. xviii. 1. and the whole congregation of Israel were gathered together, to bring up the ark of God from Kirjath-jearim. Again, they were all assembled to bring it up out of the house of Obed-Edom into Mount Zion; so again, all Israel met together to assist in the great affair of the dedication of the temple, and bring the ark into it. So we have an account, how that all sorts assisted in the rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem, not only the proper inhabitants of Jerusalem, but those that dwelt in other parts of the land; not only the priests and rulers, but the Nethinims and merchants, husbandmen and mechanics, and even women, Neh. iii. 5, 12, 26, 31, 32. And we have an account of one and another, that he repaired over against his house, ver. 10, 23, 28; and one that repaired over against his chamber, ver. 30. So now, at this time of the rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem, every one ought to promote the work of God within his own sphere, and by doing what belongs to him, in the place in which God has set him. Men in a private capacity may repair over against their houses; and even those that have not the government of families, and have but a part of a house belonging to them, should repair each one over against his chamber. Every one should be engaged to do the utmost that lies in his power.

labouring with watchfulness, care and diligence, with united hearts, and united strength, and the greatest readiness to assist one another in this work; as God's people rebuilt the wall of Jerusalem, who were so diligent in the work, that they wrought from break of day till the stars appeared, and did not so much as put off their clothes in the night. They wrought with great care and watchfulness; with one hand they laboured in the work, and with the other they held a weapon, besides the guard they set to defend them. They were so well united in it, that they appointed one to stand ready with a trumpet in his hand, that if any were assaulted in one part, those in the other parts, at the sound of the trumpet, might resort to them, and help them. Neh. iv.

Great care should be taken that the *press* should be improved to no purpose contrary to the interest of this work. We read, that when God fought against Sisera, for the deliverance of his oppressed church, "they that handle the pen of the writer" came to the help of the Lord in that affair, Judges v. 14. Whatever sort of men in Israel were intended, yet, as the words were indited by a spirit that had a perfect view of all events to the end of the world, and had a special eye in this song, to that great event of the deliverance of God's church in the latter days, of which this deliverance of Israel was a type, it is not unlikely that they have respect to authors, who should fight against the kingdom of Satan with their pens. Those therefore that publish pamphlets to the disadvantage of this work, and tend either directly or indirectly to bring it under suspicion, and to discourage or hinder it, would do well thoroughly to consider whether this be not indeed the work of God: and whether, if it be, it is not likely that God will go forth as fire, to consume all that stand in his way: and whether there be not danger that the fire kindled in them will scorch the authors.

When a people oppose Christ in the work of his Holy Spirit, it is because it touches them in something that is dear to their carnal minds, and because they see the tendency of it is to cross their pride, and deprive them of the objects of their lusts. We should take heed that at this day we be not like the Gadarenes, who—when Christ came into their country in the exercise of his glorious power and grace, triumphing over a legion of devils, and delivering a miserable creature that had long been their captive—were all alarmed, because they lost their swine by it; and a whole multitude of the country came and besought him to depart out of their coasts. They loved their filthy swine better than Jesus Christ; and had rather have a legion of devils in their country with their herd of swine, than Jesus Christ without them.

This work may be opposed in other ways, besides by

directly speaking against the whole of it. Persons may say that they believe there is a good work carried on in the country; and may sometimes bless God, in their public prayers, in general terms for any awakenings or revivals of religion there have lately been in any part of the land: and may pray that God would carry on his own work, and pour out his Spirit more and more; and yet as I apprehend, be in the sight of God great opposers of his work. Some will express themselves after this manner, who are so far from acknowledging and rejoicing in the infinite mercy and glorious grace of God in causing so happy a change, that they look on the religious state of the country, take it on the whole, much more sorrowful than it was ten years ago; and whose conversation, to those who are well acquainted with them, evidently shews, that they are more out of humour with the state of things, and enjoy themselves less than they did before ever this work began. If it be manifestly thus with us, and our talk and behaviour with respect to this work be such as has though but an indirect tendency to beget ill thoughts and suspicions in others concerning it, we are opposers of the work of God.

Instead of coming to the help of the Lord, we shall actually fight against him, if we are abundant in insisting on and setting forth the blemishes of the work; so as to manifest that we rather choose and are more forward to take notice of what is amiss, than what is good and glorious in the work: Not but that the errors committed ought to be observed and lamented, and a proper testimony borne against them, and the most probable means should be used to have them amended; but insisting much upon them, as though it were a pleasing theme, or speaking of them with more appearance of heat of spirit, or with ridicule, or an air of contempt, than grief for them, has no tendency to correct the errors; but has a tendency to darken the glory of God's power and grace appearing in the substance of the work, and to beget jealousies and ill thoughts in the minds of others concerning the whole of it. Whatever errors many zealous persons have ran into, yet if the work, in the substance of it, be the work of God, then it is a joyful day indeed; it is so in heaven, and ought to be so among God's people on earth, especially in that part of the earth where this glorious work is carried on. It is a day of great rejoicing with Christ himself, the good shepherd, when he finds his sheep that was lost, lays it on his shoulders rejoicing, and calls together his friends and neighbours saying, "rejoice with me." If we therefore are Christ's friends, now it should be a day of great rejoicing with us. If we viewed things in a just light, so great an event as the conversion of such a multitude of sinners would draw and engage our attention much more than all the imprudences and irregularities that have been: our

hearts would be swallowed up with the glory of this event, and we should have no great disposition to attend to any thing else. The imprudences and errors of poor feeble worms do not prevent great rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God, over so many poor sinners that have repented; and it will be an argument of something very ill in us, if they prevent our rejoicing.

Who loves, in a day of great joy and gladness, to be much insisting on those things that are uncomfortable? Would it not be very improper, on a king's coronation-day, to be much in taking notice of the blemishes of the royal family? Or would it be agreeable to the bridegroom, on the day of his espousals, the day of the gladness of his heart, to be much insisting on the blemishes of his bride? We have an account, how at the time of that joyful dispensation of providence, the restoration of the church of Israel after the Babylonish captivity, and at the time of the feast of tabernacles, many wept at the faults which were found amongst the people, but were reproved for taking so much notice of the blemishes of that affair, as to overlook the cause of rejoicing. Neh. viii. 9—12. "And Nehemiah which is the Tirshatha, and Ezra the priest the scribe, and the Levites that taught the people, said unto all the people, This day is holy unto the Lord your God, mourn not, nor weep: for all the people wept, when they heard the words of the law. Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared; for this day is holy unto the Lord; neither be ye sorry, for the joy of the Lord is your strength. So the Levites stilled all the people, saying, Hold your peace, for the day is holy, neither be ye grieved. And all the people went their way to eat, and to drink, and to send portions, and to make great mirth, because they had understood the words that were declared unto them."

God doubtless now expects, that all sorts of persons in New England, rulers, ministers and people, high and low, rich and poor, old and young, should take great notice of his hand in this mighty work of his grace, and should appear to acknowledge his glory in it, and greatly to rejoice in it, every one doing his utmost, in the place where God has set them in, to promote it. And God, according to his wonderful patience, seems to be still waiting to give us opportunity thus to acknowledge and honour him. But, if we finally refuse, there is not the least reason to expect any other than that his awful curse will pursue us, and that the pourings out of his wrath will be proportionable to the despised outpourings of his Spirit and grace.

PART III.

SHEWING, IN MANY INSTANCES, WHEREIN THE SUBJECTS, OR ZEALOUS PROMOTERS OF THIS WORK HAVE BEEN INJURIOUSLY BLAMED.

This work, which has lately been carried on in the land, is the work of God, and not the work of man. Its beginning has not been of men's power or device, and its being carried on depends not on our strength or wisdom; but yet God expects of all, that they should use their utmost endeavours to promote it, and that the hearts of all should be greatly engaged in this affair. We should improve our utmost strength in it, however vain human strength is without the power of God; and so he no less requires that we should improve our utmost care, wisdom and prudence, though human wisdom, of itself, be as vain as human strength. Though God is wont to carry on such a work, in such a manner as many ways to shew the weakness and vanity of means and human endeavours in themselves; yet, at the same time, he carries it on in such a manner as to encourage diligence and vigilance in the use of proper means and endeavours, and to punish the neglect of them. Therefore, in our endeavours to promote this great work, we ought to use the utmost caution, vigilance and skill, in the measures we take in order to it. A great affair should be managed with great prudence. This is the most important affair that ever New England was called to be concerned in. When a people are engaged in war with a powerful and crafty nation, it concerns them to manage an affair of such consequence with the utmost discretion. Of what vast importance then must it be, that we should be vigilant and prudent in the management of this great war with so great a host of subtile and cruel enemies. We must either conquer or be conquered; and the consequence of the victory on one side, will be our eternal destruction in both soul and body in hell, and, on the other side, our obtaining the kingdom of heaven, and reigning in it in eternal glory! We had need always to stand on our watch, and to be well versed in the art of war, and not be ignorant of the devices of our enemies, and to take heed lest by any means we be beguiled through their subtilty.

Though the devil be strong, yet in such a war as this, he

depends more on his craft than his strength. The course he has chiefly taken from time to time, to clog, hinder, and overthrow revivals of religion in the church of God, has been by his subtile, deceitful management, to beguile and mislead those that have been engaged therein; and in such a course God has been pleased, in his holy and sovereign providence, to suffer him to succeed, oftentimes, in a great measure to overthrow that which in its beginning appeared most hopeful and glorious. The work now begun, as I have shown, is eminently glorious, and if it should go on and prevail, it would make New England a kind of heaven upon earth. Is it not therefore a thousand pities that it should be overthrown through wrong and improper management, which we are led into by our subtile adversary, in our endeavours to provote it?—My present design is to take notice of some things at which offence has been taken beyond just bounds.

I. One thing that has been complained of is ministers addressing themselves rather to the affections of their hearers than to their understandings, and striving to raise their passions to the utmost height, rather by a very affectionate manner of speaking, and a great appearance of earnestness in voice and gesture, than by clear reasoning, and informing their judgment; by which means it is objected that the affections are moved, without a proportionable enlightening of the understanding.

To which I would say, I am far from thinking that it is not very profitable for ministers, in their preaching, to endeavour clearly and distinctly to explain the doctrines of religion, and unravel the difficulties that attend them, and to confirm them with strength of reason and argumentation, and also to observe some easy and clear method in their discourses, for the help of the understanding and memory; and it is very probable that those things have been of late too much neglected by many ministers. Yet I believe that the objection made, of affections raised without enlightening the understanding, is in a great measure built on a mistake, and confused notions that some have about the nature and cause of the affections, and the manner in which they depend on the understanding. All affections are raised either by light in the understanding, or by some error and delusion in the understanding: for all affections do certainly arise from some apprehension in the understanding; and that apprehension must either be agreeable to truth, or else be some mistake or delusion: if it be an apprehension or notion that is agreeable to truth, then it is light in the understanding. Therefore the thing to be inquired into is, whether the apprehensions or notions of divine

and eternal things, that are raised in people's minds by these affectionate preachers, whence their affections are excited, be apprehensions agreeable to truth, or whether they are mistakes. If the former, then the affections are raised the way they should be, viz. by informing the mind, or conveying light to the understanding. They go away with a wrong notion, who think that those preachers cannot affect their hearers by enlightening their understandings, except by such a distinct and learned handling of the doctrinal points of religion, as depends on human discipline, or the strength of natural reason, and tends to enlarge their hearers' learning, and speculative knowledge in divinity. The manner of preaching without this, may be such as shall tend very much to set divine and eternal things in a right view, and to give the hearers such ideas and apprehensions of them as are agreeable to truth, and such impressions on their hearts as are answerable to the real nature of things. And beside the words that are spoken, the manner of speaking has a great tendency to this. I think an exceeding affectionate way of preaching about the great things of religion, has in itself no tendency to beget false apprehensions of them; but on the contrary, a much greater tendency to beget true apprehensions of them, than a moderate, dull, indifferent way of speaking of them. An appearance of affection and earnestness in the manner of delivery, though very great indeed, if it be agreeable to the nature of the subject—and be not beyond a proportion to its importance and worthiness of affection, and if there be no appearance of its being feigned or forced—has so much the greater tendency to beget true ideas or apprehensions in the minds of the hearers concerning the subject spoken of, and so to enlighten the understanding: and that for this reason, that such a way or manner of speaking of these things does, in fact, more truly represent them, than a more cold and indifferent way of speaking of them. If the subject be in its own nature worthy of very great affection, then speaking of it with very great affection is most agreeable to the nature of that subject, or is the truest representation of it, and therefore has most of a tendency to beget true ideas of it in the minds of those to whom the representation is made. And I do not think ministers are to be blamed for raising the affections of their hearers too high, if that which they are affected with be only that which is worthy of affection, and their affections are not raised beyond a proportion to their importance, or worthiness of affection. I should think myself in the way of my duty, to raise the affections of my hearers as high as possibly I can, provided that they are affected with nothing but truth, and with affections that are not disagreeable to the nature of the subject. I know it has long been fashionable

to despise a very earnest and pathetical way of preaching; and they only have been valued as preachers, who have shewn the greatest extent of learning, strength of reason, and correctness of method and language. But I humbly conceive it has been for want of understanding or duly considering human nature, that such preaching has been thought to have the greatest tendency to answer the ends of preaching; and the experience of the present and past ages abundantly confirms the same. Though, as I said before, clearness of distinction and illustration, and strength of reason, and a good method, in the doctrinal handling of the truths of religion, is many ways needful and profitable, and not to be neglected; yet an increase in speculative knowledge in divinity is not what is so much needed by our people as something else. Men may abound in this sort of light, and have no heat. How much has there been of this sort of knowledge, in the Christian world, in this age? Was there ever an age, wherein strength and penetration of reason, extent of learning, exactness of distinction, correctness of style, and clearness of expression, did so abound? And yet, was there ever an age, wherein there has been so little sense of the evil of sin, so little love to God, heavenly mindedness, and holiness of life, among the professors of the true religion? Our people do not so much need to have their heads stored, as to have their hearts touched; and they stand in the greatest need of that sort of preaching, which has the greatest tendency to do this.

Those texts, Isa. lviii. 1. "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins:" And Ezek. vi. 11. "Thus saith the Lord God, Smite with thine hand, and stamp with thy foot and say, Alas for all the evil abominations of the house of Israel:" I say, these texts (however the use that some have made of them has been laughed at) will fully justify a great degree of *pathos*, and manifestation of zeal and fervency in preaching the word of God. They may indeed be abused, so as to countenance that which would be odd and unnatural amongst us, not making due allowance for difference of manners and customs in different ages and nations; but, let us interpret them how we will, they at least imply, that a most affectionate and earnest manner of delivery, in many cases, becomes a preacher of God's word.

Preaching of the word of God is commonly spoken of in scripture, in such expressions as seem to import a loud and earnest speaking; as in Isa. xl. 2. "Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her iniquity is pardoned." And ver. 3. "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord," &c. Ver. 6. "The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass.

and all the godliness thereof is as the flower of the field." Jer. ii. 2. "Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the Lord," &c. Jonah i. 2. "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it. Isa. lxi. 1, 2. "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek—to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound: To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God." Isa. lxii. 11. "Behold, the Lord hath proclaimed unto the end of the world, Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh," &c. Rom. x. 18. "Their sound went into all the earth, and their words to the end of the world." Jer. xi. 6. "Proclaim all these words in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem, saying, Hear ye the words of this covenant, and do them." So, chap. xix. 2. and vii. 2. Prov. viii. 1. "Doth not wisdom cry, and understanding put forth her voice? Ver. 3, 4. "She crieth at the gates, at the entry of the city, at the coming in at the doors. Unto you, O men, I call: and my voice is to the sons of man." And chap. i. 20. "Wisdom crieth without, she uttereth her voice in the streets." Chap. ix. 3. "She hath sent forth her maidens, she crieth upon the high places of the city." John. vii. 37. "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink."

It seems to be foretold, that the gospel should be especially preached in a loud and earnest manner, at the introduction of the prosperous state of religion in the latter days. Isa. xl. 9. "O Zion that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain! O Jerusalem, that bringeth good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength! Lift it up, and be not afraid! Say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God! Isa. lii. 7, 8. "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings!—Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice." Isa. xxvii. 13. "And it shall come pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish."—And this will be one way by which the church of God will cry at that time like a travailing woman, when Christ mystical is going to be brought forth; as Rev. xii. at the beginning. It will be by ministers, as her mouth, that Christ will then cry like a travailing woman, as in Isa. xlii. 14. "I have long time holden my peace, I have been still and refrained myself: Now will I cry like a travailing woman." Christ cries by his ministers, and the church cries by her officers. And it is worthy to be noted, that the word commonly used in the New Testament which we translate *preach*, properly signifies to *proclaim aloud like a crier*.

II. Another thing that some ministers have been greatly blamed for, and I think unjustly, is speaking *terror* to them who are already under great terrors, instead of comforting them. Indeed, if ministers in such a case go about to terrify persons with that which is not true, or to affright them by representing their case worse than it is, or in any respect otherwise than it is, they are to be condemned; but if they terrify them only by still holding forth more light to them, and giving them to understand more of the truth of their case, they are altogether to be justified. When consciences are greatly awakened by the Spirit of God, it is by light imparted, enabling men to see their case in some measure, as it is, and if more light be let in, it will terrify them still more. But ministers are not therefore to be blamed, that they endeavour to hold forth more light to the conscience, and do not rather alleviate the pain they are under, by intercepting and obstructing the light that shines already. To say any thing to those who have never believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, to represent their case any otherwise than exceeding terrible, is not to preach the word of God to them; for the word of God reveals nothing but truth, but this is to delude them. Why should we be afraid to let persons who are in an infinitely miserable condition, know the truth or bring them into the light, for fear it should terrify them? It is light that must convert them, if ever they are converted. The more we bring sinners into the light, while they are miserable, and the light is terrible to them, the more likely it is that afterward the light will be joyful to them. The ease, peace and comfort which natural men enjoy, have their foundation in darkness and blindness; therefore as that darkness vanishes and light comes in, their peace vanishes, and they are terrified. But that is no good argument why we should endeavour to hold their darkness, that we may uphold their comfort. The truth is, that as long as men reject Christ, and do not savingly believe in him, however they may be awakened, and however strict, and conscientious, and laborious they may be in religion, they have the wrath of God abiding on them, they are his enemies, and the children of the devil; (as the scripture calls all who are not savingly converted, Matt. xiii. 38. I John iii. 10.) and it is uncertain whether they shall ever obtain mercy. God is under no obligation to shew them mercy, nor will he, if they fast and pray, and cry never so much; and they are then especially provoking God, under those terrors, that they stand it out against Christ, and will not accept of an offered Saviour, though they see so much need of him. And seeing this is the truth, they should be told so, that they may be sensible what their case indeed is.

To blame a minister for thus declaring the truth to those who are under awakenings, and not immediately administering

comfort to them, is like blaming a surgeon, because when he has begun to thrust in his lance, whereby he has already put his patient to great pain, and he shrinks and cries out with anguish, he is so cruel that he will not stay his hand, but goes on to thrust it in further, till he comes to the core of the wound. Such a compassionate physician, who as soon as his patient began to flinch, should withdraw his hand, and go about immediately to apply a plaister, to skin over the wound, and leave the core untouched, would heal the hurt slightly, crying, *Peace, peace, when there is no peace.*

Indeed something besides terror is to be preached to them whose consciences are awakened. They are to be told that there is a Saviour provided, who is excellent and glorious; who has shed his precious blood for sinners, and is every way sufficient to save them; who stands ready to receive them, if they will heartily embrace him; for this is also the truth, as well as that they now are in an infinitely dreadful condition. This is the word of God. Sinners, at the same time that they are told how miserable their case is, should be earnestly invited to come and accept of a Saviour, and yield their hearts unto him, with all the winning, encouraging arguments, that the gospel affords. But this is to induce them to escape from the misery of their condition, not to make them think their present condition to be less miserable than it is, or to abate their uneasiness and distress, while they are in it. That would be the way to quiet them, and fasten them there, and not to excite them to flee from it. Comfort in one sense, is to be held forth to sinners under awakenings of conscience, i. e. comfort is to be offered to them in Christ, on their fleeing from their present miserable state to him. But comfort is not to be administered to them in their present state, or while out of Christ. No comfort is to be administered to them, from any thing in them, any of their qualifications, prayers or other performances, past, present, or future; but ministers should in such cases, strive to their utmost to take all such comforts from them, though it greatly increases their terror. A person who sees himself ready to sink into hell, is prone to strive, some way or other, to lay God under some obligation to him; but he is to be beat off from every thing of that nature, though it greatly increases his terror, to see himself entirely destitute of any refuge or any thing of his own to lay hold of; as a man that sees himself in danger of drowning, is in terror, and endeavours to catch hold on every twig within his reach, and he that pulls away those twigs from him increases his terror; yet if they are insufficient to save him, and by being in his way prevents his looking to that which will save him, to pull away them is necessary to save his life.

If sinners are in distress from any error they embrace, or

mistake they are under, that is to be removed. For instance, if they are in terror, from an apprehension that they have committed the unpardonable sin, or that those things have happened to them which are certain signs of reprobation, or any other delusion, such terrors have no tendency to do them any good; for these terrors are from temptation, and not from conviction. But the terror which arises from conviction, or a sight of truth, is to be increased; for those who are most awakened, have great remaining stupidity. It is from remaining blindness and darkness that they see no more, and that remaining blindness is a disease which we should endeavour to remove. I am not afraid to tell sinners who are most sensible of their misery, that their case is indeed as miserable as they think it to be, and a thousand times more so; for this is the truth. Some may be ready to say, That though it be the truth, yet the truth is not to be spoken at all times, and seems not to be seasonable then. But it seems to me, such truth is never more seasonable than at such a time, when Christ is beginning to open the eyes of conscience. Ministers ought to act as co-workers with him: to take that opportunity, and to the utmost to improve that advantage, and strike while the iron is hot. When the light has begun to shine, then they should remove all obstacles, and use all proper means, that it may come in more fully. And experience abundantly shews, that to take this course is not of a hurtful tendency, but very much the contrary. I have seen, in very many instances, the happy effects of it, and oftentimes a very speedy happy issue; and never knew any ill consequence, in case of real conviction, and when distress has been only from thence.

I know of but one case, wherein the truth ought to be withheld from sinners in distress of conscience, and that is the case of melancholy; And it is not to be withheld from them, as if the truth tends to do them hurt; but because, if we speak the truth to them, sometimes they will be deceived, and led into error by it, through that strange disposition there is in them to take things wrong. So that, though what is spoken is truth, yet as it is heard, received, and applied by them, it is falsehood; as it will be, unless the truth be spoken with abundance of caution and prudence, and consideration of their disposition and circumstances. But the most awful truths of God's word ought not to be withheld from public congregations, because it may happen that some such melancholic persons may be in them: any more than the Bible is to be withheld from the Christian world, because it is manifest that there are a great many melancholic persons in Christendom that exceedingly abuse the awful things contained in the scripture, to their own wounding. Nor do I think that to be of weight, which is made use of by some, as a great and dreadful objection against

the terrifying preaching that has of late been in New England, viz. That there have been some instances of melancholic persons who have so abused it, that the issue has been the murder of themselves. The objection from hence is no stronger against awakening preaching, than it is against the Bible itself. There are hundreds and probably thousands of instances, of persons who have murdered themselves under religious melancholy. These murders probably never would have been, if the world had remained in a state of heathenish darkness. The bible has not only been the occasion of these sad effects, but of thousands, and I suppose millions, of other cruel murders committed in the persecutions that have been raised, which never would have been if it had not been for the Bible. Many whole countries have been as it were deluged with innocent blood, which would not have been if the gospel never had been preached in the world. It is not a good objection against any kind of preaching, that some men abuse it greatly to their hurt. It has been acknowledged by all divines, as a thing common in all ages, and all christian countries, that a very great part of those who sit under the gospel abuse it. It proves an occasion of their far more aggravated damnation, and so of eternally murdering their souls; which is an effect infinitely more terrible than the murder of their bodies. It is as unjust to lay the blame of these self-murders to those ministers who have declared the awful truths of God's word in the most lively and affecting manner, as it would be to lay the blame of hardening men's hearts, and blinding their eyes, and their more dreadful eternal damnation, to the prophet Isaiah or Jesus Christ, because this was the consequence of their preaching with respect to many of their hearers; Isa. vi. 10. John ix. 39. Matt. 13, 14. Though a few have abused the awakening preaching to their own temporal death; yet it may be to one such instance, there have been hundreds, yea thousands, who have been saved, by this means, from eternal death.

What has more especially given offence to many, and raised a loud cry against some preachers, as though their conduct were intolerable, is their frighting poor innocent children with talk of hell-fire, and eternal damnation. But if those who complain so loudly of this, really believe what is the general profession of the country, viz. That all are by nature the children of wrath, and heirs of hell—and that every one that has not been born again, whether he be young or old, is exposed every moment to eternal destruction—then such a complaint and cry as this bewrays a great deal of weakness and inconsideration. Innocent as children seem to us, yet if they are out of Christ, they are not so in the sight of God; but are in a most miserable condition, as well as grown persons: and

they are naturally very senseless and stupid, being *born as the wild ass's colt*, and need much to awaken them. Why should we conceal the truth from them? Will those children who have been dealt tenderly with in this respect, and lived and died insensible of their misery till they come to feel it in hell, ever thank parents and others for their tenderness, in not letting them know their danger? If parents' love towards their children were not blind, it would affect them much more to see their children every day exposed to eternal burnings, and yet senseless, than to see them suffer the distress of that awakening which is necessary in order to their escape, and that tends to their being eternally happy as the children of God. A child that has a dangerous wound may need the painful lance, as well as grown persons; and that would be a foolish pity, in such a case, that should hold back the lance, and throw away the life.——I have seen the happy effects of dealing plainly and thoroughly with children in the concerns of their souls, without sparing them at all, in many instances; and never knew any ill consequence of it, in any one instance.

III. Another thing, against which a great deal has been said, is having so frequent *religious meetings*, and spending so much time in religion. Indeed there are none of the externals of religion but what are capable of excess; and I believe it is true, that there has not been a due proportion observed of late. We have placed religion too much in the external duties of the first table; we have abounded in religious meetings, in praying, reading, hearing, singing, and religious conference; and there has not been a proportionable increase of zeal for deeds of charity, and other duties of the second table; though it must be acknowledged that they are also much increased. But yet it appears to me, that this objection has been in the general groundless. Though worldly business must be done, and persons ought not to neglect that of their particular callings; yet it is to the honour of God, that a people should be so much in outward acts of religion, as to carry in it a visible, public appearance of a great engagedness of mind, especially at such an extraordinary time. When God appears unusually present with a people in wonderful works of power and mercy, they should spend more time than usual in religious exercises, to put honour upon that God who is then extraordinarily present, and to seek his face. Thus it was with the Christian church in Jerusalem, on occasion of that extraordinary pouring out of the Spirit, soon after Christ's ascension, Acts ii. 46. "And they continued daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house;" and at Ephesus, where the Christians attend public religious exercises, every day, for two years together. Acts

xix. 8, 9, 10. "And he went into the synagogue and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God. But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus. And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia, heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks." And as to the grand objection of "six days shalt thou labour;" all that can be understood by it, and all that the very objectors themselves understood by it, is, that we *may* follow our secular labours in those six days that are not the sabbath, and *ought* to be diligent in them; not but that sometimes we may turn from them, even within those six days, to keep a day of fasting or thanksgiving, or to attend a lecture; and that more frequently or rarely, as God's providence and the state of things shall call us, according to the best of our discretion.

Though secular business, as I said before, ought not to be neglected; yet I cannot see how it can be maintained, that religion ought not to be attended, lest it should injure our temporal affairs, on any other principle than that of infidelity. None object against injuring one temporal affair for the sake of another of much greater importance; And therefore, if eternal things are as real as temporal things, and are indeed of infinitely greater importance; then why may we not voluntarily suffer, in some measure, in our temporal concerns, while we are seeking eternal riches, and immortal glory? It is looked upon as no way improper, for a whole nation to spend a considerable time, and much of their outward substance, on some extraordinary temporal occasion, for the sake only of the ceremonies of a public rejoicing; and it would be thought dishonourable to be very exact about what we spend, or careful lest we injure our estates, on such an occasion. And why should we be exact only with Almighty God, so that it should be a crime to be otherwise than scrupulously careful lest we injure ourselves in our temporal interest, to put honour upon him, and seek our own eternal happiness? We should take heed that none of us be in any wise like Judas, who greatly complained of needless expense, and waste of outward substance, to put honour upon Christ, when Mary broke her box, and poured the precious ointment on his head. He *had indignation* within himself on that account, and cries out, "Why was this waste of ointment made? For it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor." Mark xiv. 3, &c. and John xii. 4, &c.

Besides, if the matter be justly examined, I believe it will

be found, that the country has lost no time from their temporal affairs by the late revival of religion, but have rather gained; and that more time has been saved from frolicking and tavern-haunting, idleness and unprofitable visits; vain talk, fruitless pastimes, and needless diversions, than has lately been spent in extraordinary religion; and probably five times as much has been saved in various ways, as has been spent by religious meetings. The great complaint made against so much time being spent in religion, cannot be in general from a real concern that God may be honoured, and his will done, and the best good of men promoted; as is very manifest from this, that now there is a much more earnest and zealous outcry made in the country against this extraordinary religion, than was before against so much time spent in tavern-haunting, vain company keeping, night-walking, and other things, which wasted both our time and substance, and injured our moral virtue.

The frequent preaching that has lately obtained, has in a particular manner been objected against as unprofitable and prejudicial. It is objected, that, when sermons are heard so very often, one sermon tends to thrust out another; so that persons lose the benefit of all. They say, two or three sermons in a week is as much as they can remember and digest. —Such objections against frequent preaching, if they be not from an enmity against religion, are for want of duly considering the way that sermons usually profit an auditory. The main benefit obtained by preaching is by impression made upon the mind at the time, and not by an effect that arises afterwards by a remembrance of what was delivered. And though an after-remembrance of what was heard in a sermon is oftentimes very profitable; yet, for the most part, that remembrance is from an impression the words made on the heart at the time; and the memory profits, as it renews and increases that impression. A frequent inculcating the more important things of religion in preaching, has no tendency to rase out such impressions, but to increase them, and fix them deeper and deeper in the mind as is found by experience. It never used to be objected against, that persons upon the sabbath, after they have heard two sermons on that day, should go home and spend the remaining part of the sabbath in reading the scriptures, and printed sermons; which, in proportion as it has a tendency to affect the mind at all, tends as much to drive out what they have heard, as if they heard another sermon preached. It seems to have been the practice of the apostles to preach every day, in places where they went; yea, though sometimes they continued long in one place, Acts ii. 42, 46. and xix. 8, 9, 10. They did not avoid preaching one day, for fear they should thrust out of the minds of their hearers what they had delivered the day

before; nor did Christians avoid going every day to hear, for fear of any such bad effect; Acts ii. 42, 46.

There are some things in scripture that seem to signify that there should be preaching in an extraordinary frequency, at the time when God should introduce the flourishing state of religion in the latter days; as Isa. lxii. 1, 2. "For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth. And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness and all kings thy glory." And, ver. 5, 6. "For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee: and as a bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee. I have set watchman upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night." The destruction of the city of Jericho is evidently, in all its circumstances, intended by God as a great type of the overthrow of Satan's kingdom. The priests blowing with trumpets, represents ministers preaching the gospel. The people compassed the city seven days, the priests blowing the trumpets. But, when the day was come that the walls of the city were to fall, the priests were more frequent and abundant in blowing their trumpets; there was as much done in one day then, as had been done in seven days before; they compassed the city seven times that day, blowing their trumpets, till at length it came to one long and perpetual blast, and then the walls of the city fell down flat. The extraordinary preaching that shall be at the beginning of that glorious jubilee of the church, is represented by the extraordinary sounding of trumpets, throughout the land of Canaan, at the beginning of the year of jubilee. And the reading of the law before all Israel, in the year of release, at the feast of tabernacles; and the crowing of the cock at break of day, which brought Peter to repentance; seem to me to be intended to signify the awakening of God's church out of their lethargy, wherein they had denied their Lord, by the extraordinary preaching of the gospel that shall be at the dawning of the day of the church's light and glory. And there seems at this day to be an uncommon hand of Divine Providence, in animating, enabling, and upholding some ministers in such abundant labours.

IV. Another thing, wherein I think some ministers have been injured, is in being very much blamed for making so much of outcries, faintings, and other bodily effects: speaking of them as tokens of the presence of God, and arguments of the success of preaching; seeming to strive to their utmost to bring a congregation to that pass, and seeming to rejoice in it, yea, even blessing God for it when they see these effects.

Concerning this I would observe, in the *first* place, That there are many things, with respect to cryings out, falling down, &c. charged on ministers, that they are not guilty of. Some would have it, that they speak of these things as certain evidences of a work of the Spirit of God on the hearts of their hearers, or that they esteem these bodily effects themselves to be the work of God, as though the Spirit of God took hold of and agitated the bodies of men; and some are charged with making these things essential, and supposing that persons cannot be converted without them; whereas I never yet could see the person that held either of these things.

But for speaking of such effects as probable tokens of God's presence, and arguments of the success of preaching, it seems to me that they are not to be blamed; because I think they are so indeed. And therefore when I see them excited by preaching the important truths of God's word, urged and enforced by proper arguments and motives, or as consequent on other means that are good, I do not scruple to speak of them, and to rejoice in them, and bless God for them as such; and for this reason, viz. That from time to time, upon proper inquiry and examination, and observation of the consequences and fruits, I have found that these are all evidences of the persons in whom these effects appear, being under the influences of God's Spirit, in such cases. Crying out, in such a manner, and with such circumstances, as I have seen them from time to time, is as much an evidence to me, of the general cause it proceeds from, as language. I have learned the meaning of it the same way that persons learn the meaning of language, viz. by use and experience. I confess that when I see a great crying out in a congregation, in the manner that I have seen it when those things are held forth to them which are worthy of their being greatly affected by them, I rejoice in it, much more than merely in an appearance of solemn attention, and a shew of affection by weeping; and that because when there have been those outcries, I have found from time to time a much greater and more excellent effect. To rejoice that the work of God is carried on calmly, without much ado, is in effect to rejoice that it is carried on with less power, or that there is not so much of the influence of God's Spirit.—For though the degree of the influence of the Spirit of God, on *particular persons*, is by no means to be judged of by the degree of external appearances, because of the different constitutions, tempers and circumstances of men; yet, if there be a very powerful influence of the Spirit of God on a mixed multitude, it will cause some way or other a great visible commotion.

And as to ministers aiming at such effects, and striving by all means to bring a congregation to that pass, that there

should be such an uproar among them; I suppose none aim at it any otherwise, than as they strive to raise the affections of their hearers to such a height as very often appears in these effects. And if those affections are commonly good, and it be found by experience that such a degree of them commonly has a good effect, I think they are to be justified in so doing.

V. Again, some ministers have been blamed for keeping persons together, that have been under great affections, which have appeared in such extraordinary outward manifestations.—Many think this promotes confusion, that persons in such circumstances do but discompose each other's minds, and disturb the minds of others; and that therefore it is best they should be dispersed; and that when any in a congregation are strongly seized, that they cannot forbear outward manifestations of it, they should be removed, that others' minds may not be diverted.

I cannot but think that those who thus object, go upon quite wrong notions of things. For though persons ought to take heed that they do not make any ado without necessity; for this will be the way in time to have such appearances lose all their effect; yet the unavoidable manifestations of strong religious affections tend to a happy influence on the minds of by-standers, and are found by experience to have an excellent and durable effect. And so to contrive and order things, that others may have opportunity and advantage to observe them, has been found to be blessed, as a great means to promote the work of God; and to prevent their being in the way of observation, is to prevent the effect of that which God makes use of as a principal means of carrying on his work at such an extraordinary time, viz. example: which is often spoken of in scripture, as one of the chief means by which God would carry on his work in the prosperity of religion in the latter days.—I have mentioned some texts already to this purpose, in what I published before, of *the Marks of a Work of the True Spirit;* but would here mention some others. In Zech. ix. 15, 16. those that in the latter days should be filled in an extraordinary manner with the Holy Spirit, so as to appear in outward manifestations, and making a noise, are spoken of as those that God, in these uncommon circumstances, will set up to the view of others as a prize or ensign, by their example and the excellency of their attainments, to animate and draw others, as men gather about an ensign, and run for a prize, a crown and precious jewels, set up in their view. The words are—"And they shall drink and make a noise as through wine, and they shall be filled like bowls, and as the corners of the altar. And the Lord their God shall save them in that day as the flock of

his people; for they shall be as the stones of a crown, lifted up as an ensign upon his land." (I shall have occasion to say something more of this scripture afterwards.) Those that make the objection I am upon, instead of suffering this ensign to be in public view, are for having it removed, and hid in some corner. To the like purpose is that, Isa. lxii. 3. "Thou shalt be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God." Here it is observable, that it is not said, thou shalt be a crown *upon the head*, but *in the hand* of the Lord; *i. e.* held forth, in thy beauty and excellency, as a prize, to be bestowed upon others that shall behold thee, and be animated by the brightness and lustre which God shall endow thee with. The great influence of the example of God's people, in their bright and excellent attainments, to propagate religion in those days, is further signified in Isa. lx. 3. "And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising." With ver. 22. "A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation." And Zech. x. 8. 9. "And they shall increase, as they have increased; and I will sow them among the people." And Hos. ii. 23. "And I will sow her unto me in the earth." So Jer. xxxi. 27.

VI. Another thing, that gives great disgust to many, is the disposition that persons shew, under great affections, to speak so much; and, with such earnestness and vehemence, to be setting forth the greatness and wonderfulness and importance of divine and eternal things; and to be so passionately warning, inviting and intreating others.

Concerning which I would say, That I am far from thinking that such a disposition should be wholly without any limits or regulation, (as I shall more particularly shew afterwards;) and I believe some have erred, in setting no bounds, and indulging and encouraging this disposition without any kind of restraint or direction. But yet it seems to me, that such a disposition in general is what both reason and scripture will justify. Those who are offended at such things, as though they were unreasonable, are not just. Upon examination it will probably be found, that they have one rule of reasoning about temporal things, and another about spiritual things. They do not at all wonder, if a person on some very great and affecting occasion, an occasion of extraordinary danger or great joy, that eminently and immediately concerns him and others—is disposed to speak much, and with great earnestness, especially to those with whom he is united in the bonds of dear affection, and great concern for their good. And therefore, if they were just, why would not they allow it in spiritual things? and much *more* in them, agreeably to the vastly greater importance and more affecting nature of spiritual

things, and the concern which true religion causes in men's minds for the good of others, and the disposition it gives and excites to speak God's praises, to shew forth his infinite glory, and talk of all his glorious perfections and works?

That a very great and proper sense of the importance of religion, and the danger sinners are in, should sometimes cause an almost insuperable disposition to speak and warn others, is agreeable to Jer. vi. 10, 11. "To whom shall I speak and give warning that they may hear? Behold, their ear is uncircumcised and they cannot hearken: Behold, the word of the Lord is unto them a reproach; they have no delight in it. Therefore I am full of the fury of the Lord; I am weary with holding in: I will pour it out upon the children abroad, and upon the assembly of the young men together; for even the husband with the wife shall be taken, the aged with him that is full of days." And that true Christians, when they come to be as it were waked out of sleep, and to be filled with a sweet and joyful sense of the excellent things of religion, by the preaching of the gospel, or by other means of grace, should be disposed to be much in speaking of divine things, though before they were dumb, is agreeable to what Christ says to his church, Cant. vii. 9. "And the roof of thy mouth is like the best wine for my beloved, that goeth down sweetly, causing the lips of those that are asleep to speak." The roof of the church's mouth is the officers in the church, that preach the gospel: their word is to Christ's beloved like the best wine, that goes down sweetly; extraordinarily refreshing and enlivening the saints, causing them to speak, though before they were mute and asleep. It is said by some, That the subjects of this work, when they get together, talking loud and earnestly in their pretended great joys, several in a room talking at the same time, make a noise just like a company of drunken persons. On which I would observe, that it is foretold that God's people should do so, in that forementioned place, Zech. ix. 15—17, of which I shall now take more particular notice. The words are as follow: "The Lord of hosts shall defend them, and they shall devour and subdue with sling stones, and they shall drink and make a noise as through wine, and they shall be filled like bowls, and as the corners of the altar. And the Lord their God shall save them in that day as the flock of his people; for they shall be as the stones of a crown, lifted up as an ensign upon his land. For how great is his goodness, and how great is his beauty! Corn shall make the young men cheerful, and new wine the maids." The words are very remarkable: Here it is foretold, that at the time when Christ shall set up an universal kingdom upon earth, (ver. 20.) the children of Zion shall drink, till they are filled like the vessels of the sanctuary. And, if we would know with what they shall be

thus filled, the prophecy does in effect explain itself; they shall be filled as the vessels of the sanctuary that contained the drink-offering, which was wine. And yet the words imply, that it shall not literally be wine that they shall drink and be filled with, because it is said, They shall drink, and make a noise, "as through wine," as if they had drank wine: which implies that they had not literally done it. And therefore we must understand the words, that they shall drink into that, and be filled with that, which the wine of the drink offering typically represented, which is the Holy Spirit, as well as the blood of Christ, that new wine that is drank in our heavenly Father's kingdom. They shall be filled with the Spirit, which the apostle sets in opposition to a being drunk with wine, Eph. v. 18. This is the new wine spoken of, ver. 17. It is the same with that "best wine" spoken of in Canticles, "that goes down sweetly, causing the lips of those that are asleep to speak." It is here foretold, that the children of Zion in the latter days, should be filled with that which should make them cheerful, and cause them to make a noise as through wine, and by which these joyful happy persons shall as stones of a crown lifted up as an ensign upon God's land, being made joyful in the extraordinary manifestations of the beauty and love of Christ: as it follows, "How great is his goodness! and how great is his beauty!" And it is further remarkable that, as is here foretold, it should be thus especially amongst young people: "Corn shall make the young men cheerful, and new wine the maids." It would be ridiculous to understand this of literal bread and wine. Without doubt, the same spiritual blessings are signified by bread and wine here, which were represented by Melchizedek's bread and wine, and are signified by the bread and wine in the Lord's supper. One of the marginal readings is, "shall make the young men to speak;" which is agreeable to that in Canticles, of the "best wines causing the lips of those that are asleep to speak."

We ought not to be in any measure like the unbelieving Jews in Christ's time, who were disgusted both with crying out with distress, and with joy. When the poor blind man cried out before all the multitude, "Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me!" and continued instantly thus doing, the multitude rebuked him, and charged him that he should hold his tongue, Mark x. 46—48. and Luke xviii. 38, 39. They looked upon it to be a very indecent noise that he made; a thing very ill becoming him, to cause his voice to be heard so much, and so loud, among the multitude. And when Christ made his solemn and triumphant entry into Jerusalem, (which I have before observed, was a type of the glory and triumph of the latter days,) the whole multitude of the disciples, especially young people, began to rejoice and praise God with a

loud voice, for all the mighty works that they had seen, saying, "Blessed be the king that cometh in the name of the Lord! peace in heaven, and glory in the highest!" The Pharisees said to Christ, "Master, rebuke thy disciples." They did not understand such great transports of joy; it seemed to them a very unsuitable and indecent noise and clamour that they made, a confused uproar, many crying out together, as though they were out of their wits: they wondered that Christ would tolerate it. But what says Christ? "I tell you, that if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out." The words seem to intimate, that there was cause enough to constrain those whose hearts were not harder than the very stones to cry out, and make a noise; which is something like that other expression, of "causing the lips of those that are asleep to speak."

When many, under great religious affections, are earnestly speaking together of divine wonders, in various parts of a company, to those who are next them; some attending to one, and others to another; there is something very beautiful in it, provided they do not speak so as to drown each other's voices, that none can hear what any say. There is a greater and more affecting appearance of a joint engagedness of heart, in the love and praises of God: and I had rather see it, than to see one speaking alone, and all attending to what he says; it has more of the appearance of conversation. When a multitude meets on any occasion of temporal rejoicing, freely and cheerfully to converse together, they are not wont to observe the ceremony of but one speaking at a time, while all the rest in a formal manner set themselves to attend to what he says. That would spoil all conversation, and turn it into the formality of set speeches. It is better for lay persons, speaking one to another of the things of God, when they meet together, to speak after the manner of christian conversation, than to observe the formality of but one speaking at a time, the whole multitude silently and solemnly attending to what he says; which would carry in it too much of the air of the authority and solemnity of preaching. The apostle says, 1 Cor. xiv. 29, 30, 31. "Let the prophets speak, two or three, and let the others judge: If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace: For ye may all prophecy, one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted:" but this does not reach the present case, because what the apostle is speaking of is the solemnity of their religious exercises in public worship, and persons speaking in the church by immediate inspiration, and in the use of the gift of prophecy, or some gift of inspiration, in the exercise of which they acted as extraordinary ministers of Christ.

VII. Another thing, that some have found fault with,

is abounding so much in singing in religious meetings. Objection against such a thing as this, seems to arise from a suspicion already established of this work. They doubt of the pretended extraordinary love and joys that attend this work, and so find fault with the manifestations of them. If they thought persons were truly the subjects of an extraordinary degree of divine love, and heavenly rejoicing in God, I suppose they would not wonder at their having a disposition to be much in praise. They object not against the saints and angels in heaven singing praises and hallelujahs to God, without ceasing day or night; and therefore doubtless will allow that the more the saints on earth are like them in their dispositions, the more they will be disposed to do like them. They will readily own that the generality of Christians have great reason to be ashamed that they have so little thankfulness, and are no more in praising God, whom they have such infinite cause to praise. And why therefore should Christians be found fault with, for shewing a disposition, to be much in praising God, and manifesting a delight in that heavenly exercise? To complain of this, is to be too much like the Pharisees, who were disgusted when the multitude of the disciples began to rejoice, and with loud voices to praise God, and cry, Hosanna, when Christ was entering into Jerusalem.

There are many things in scripture, that seem to intimate that praising God, both in speeches and songs, will be what the church of God will very much abound in, in the approaching glorious day. So on the seventh day of compassing the walls of Jericho, when the priests blew with the trumpets in an extraordinary manner, the people shouted with a great shout, and the wall of the city fell down flat. So the ark was brought back from its banishment, with extraordinary shouting and singing of the whole congregation of Israel. And the places in the prophecies of scripture, signifying that the church of God, in the glorious Jubilee that is foretold, shall greatly abound in singing and shouting forth the praises of God, are too many to be mentioned. And there will be cause enough for it: I believe it will be a time wherein both heaven and earth will be much more full of joy and praise than ever they were before.

But what is more especially found fault with, in the singing that is now practised, is making use of hymns of human composure. I am far from thinking that the book of Psalms should be thrown by in our public worship, but that it should always be used in the Christian church to the end of the world: But I know of no obligation we are under to *confine* ourselves to it. I can find no command or rule of God's word, that dose any more confine us to the words of the scripture in our singing, than it does in our praying; we speak to God in both. And I can see no reason why we should limit

ourselves to such particular forms of words, that we find in the Bible, in speaking to him by way of praise in metre, and with music, than when we speak to him in prose, by way of prayer and supplication. And it is really *needful* that we should have some other songs besides the Psalms of David. It is unreasonable to suppose that the Christian church should for ever, and even in times of her greatest light, in her praises of God and the Lamb, be confined only to the words of the Old Testament, wherein all the greatest and most glorious things of the gospel, that are infinitely the greatest subjects of her praise, are spoken of under a vail, and not so much as the name of our glorious Redeemer ever mentioned, but in some dark figure, or as hid under the name of some type. And as to our making use of the words of others, and not those that are conceived by ourselves, it is no more than we do in all our public prayers; the whole worshipping assembly, excepting one only, makes use of the words that are conceived by him who speaks for the rest.

VIII. Another thing that many have disliked, is the religious meetings of children to read and pray together, and perform religious exercises by themselves. What is objected is children's want of that knowledge and discretion which is requisite in order to a decent and profitable management of religious exercises. But it appears to me the objection is not sufficient Children, as they have the nature of men, are inclined to society: and those of them who are capable of society one with another, are capable of the influences of the Spirit of God in its active fruits. And if they are inclined by a religious disposition, which they have from the spirit of God, in order to improve their society one with another, in a religious manner, and to religious purposes, who should forbid them? If they have not discretion to observe method in their religious performances, or to speak sense in all that they say in prayer, they may notwithstanding have a good meaning, and God understands them, and it does not spoil or interrupt their devotion one with another. We who are adults have defects in our prayers, that are a thousand times worse in the sight of God, and are a greater confusion, and more absurd nonsense in his eyes, than their childish indiscretions. There is not so much difference before God, between children and grown persons, as we are ready to imagine; we are all poor, ignorant, foolish babes, in his sight. Our adult age does not bring us so much nearer to God as we are apt to think. God in this work has shewn a remarkable regard to little children; never was there such a glorious work amongst persons in their childhood, as has been of late, in New England. He has been

pleased in a wonderful manner to perfect praise out of the mouths of babes and sucklings; and many of them have more of that knowledge and wisdom that pleases him, and renders their religious worship acceptable, than many of the great and learned men of the world: it is they, in the sight of God, who are the ignorant and foolish children; these are grown men, and an hundred years old, in comparison with them. It is to be hoped that the days are coming, prophesied of Isa. lxv. 20. "when the child shall die an hundred years old."

I have seen many happy effects of children's religious meetings; and God has seemed often remarkably to own them in their meetings, and really descended from heaven to be amongst them: I have known several probable instances of children being converted at such meetings. I should therefore think, that if children appear to be really moved to it by a religious disposition, and not merely from a childish affectation of imitating grown persons, they ought by no means to be discouraged or discountenanced. But yet it is fit that care should be taken of them by their parents and pastors, to instruct and direct them, and to correct imprudent conduct and irregularities if they are perceived, or any thing by which the devil may pervert and destroy the design of their meetings. —All should take heed that they do not find fault with and despise the religion of children, from an evil principle, lest they should be like the chief priests and scribes, who were sore displeased at the religious worship and praises of little children, and the honour they gave Christ in the temple. We have an account of it, and of what Christ said upon it, in Matt. xxi. 15, 16. "And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosannah to the son of David, they were sore displeased, and said unto him, Hearest thou what those say? And Jesus saith unto them, Yea, have ye never read, Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?"

PART IV.

SHEWING WHAT THINGS ARE TO BE CORRECTED OR AVOIDED, IN PROMOTING THIS WORK, OR IN OUR BEHAVIOUR UNDER IT.

HAVING thus observed, in some instances, wherein the conduct of those that have appeared to be the subjects of this work or have been zealous to promote it, has been objected against or complained of without or beyond just cause; I proceed now, to shew what things ought to be corrected or avoided.

Many, who are zealous for this glorious work of God, are heartily sick of the great noise there is in the country about *imprudences* and *disorders;* they have heard it so often from the mouths of opposers, that they are prejudiced against the sound. And they look upon it, that what is called being *prudent and regular*, so much insisted on, is no other than being asleep, or cold and dead in religion; and that the great imprudence, so much blamed, is only being alive and engaged in the things of God. They are therefore rather confirmed in any practice, than brought off from it, by the clamour they hear against it, as imprudent and irregular. And, to tell the truth, the cry of irregularity and imprudence has been much more in the mouths of those who have been enemies to the main of the work than others; for they have watched for the halting of the zealous, and eagerly catched at any thing that has been wrong, and have greatly insisted on it, made the most of it, and magnified it; especially have they watched for errors in zealous preachers, who are much in reproving and condemning the wickedness of the times. They would therefore do well to consider that scripture, Isa. xxix. 20, 21. "The scorner is consumed, and all that watch for iniquity are cut off, that make a man an offender for a word, and lay a snare for him that reproveth in the gate, and turn aside the just for a thing of nought." They have not only too much insisted on and magnified real errors, but have very injuriously charged them as guilty in things wherein they have been innocent, and have done their duty. This has so prejudiced the minds of some, that they have been ready to think that all which has

been said about errors and imprudences was injurious and from an ill spirit. It has confirmed them, that there is no such thing as any prevailing imprudences; and it has made them less cautious and suspicious of themselves, lest they should err. Herein the devil has had an advantage put into his hands, and has taken it; and, doubtless, has been too subtile for some of the true friends of religion. That would be strange indeed, if in so great a commotion and revolution, and such a new state of things, wherein so many have been engaged, none have been guilty of any imprudence. It would be such a revival of religion as never was, if among so many men, not guided by infallible inspiration, there had not been many notable errors in judgment and conduct; our young preachers, and young converts, must in general vastly exceed Luther, the head of the Reformation, who was guilty of a great many excesses in that great affair in which God made him the chief instrument.

If we look back into the history of the church of God in past ages, we may observe that it has been a common device of the devil, to overset a revival of religion; when he finds he can keep men quiet and secure no longer, then he drives them to excesses and extravagancies. He holds them back as long as he can; but when he can do it no longer, then he will push them on, and, if possible, run them upon their heads. And it has been by this means chiefly that he has been successful, in several instances, to overthrow most hopeful and promising beginnings. Yea, the principal means by which the devil was successful, by degrees, to overset that grand religious revival of the world, in the primitive ages of Christianity, and in a manner to overthrow the Christian church through the earth, and to make way for the great Antichristian apostacy, that masterpiece of all the devil's works, was to improve the indiscreet zeal of Christians, to drive them into those three extremes of *enthusiasm*, *superstition* and *severity towards opposers*; which should be enough for an everlasting warning to the Christian church.

Though the devil will do his diligence to stir up the open enemies of religion, yet he knows what is for his interest so well, that in a time of revival of religion his main strength shall be tried with the friends of it; and he will chiefly exert himself in his attempts to mislead them. One truly zealous person, in the time of such an event, that seems to have a great hand in the affair, and draws the eyes of many upon him, may do more (through Satan's being too subtile for him) to hinder the work, than a hundred great, and strong, and open opposers. In the time of a great *work* of Christ, his hands, with which he *works*, are often wounded in the house of his friends, and his work hindered chiefly by them:

So that if any one inquires, as in Zech. xiii. 6. "What are those wounds in thine hands?" he may answer, "Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends."

The errors of the friends of the work of God, and especially of the great promoters of it, give vast advantage to the enemies of such a work. Indeed there are many things which are no errors, but are only duties faithfully and thoroughly done, that wound the minds of such persons, more than real errors: But yet one real error gives opposers as much advantage, and hinders and clogs the work as much as ten that are only supposed ones. Real errors do not fret and gall the enemies of religion so much as those things that are strictly right; but they encourage them more, they give them liberty, and open a gap for them; so that some who before kept their enmity burning in their own breasts, and durst not shew themselves, will on such an occasion take courage and give themselves vent, and their rage will be like that of an enemy let loose. Those who lay still before, having nothing to say but what they would be ashamed of, (agreeable to Tit. ii. 8.) when they have such a weapon put into their hands, will fight with all violence. And indeed the enemies of religion would not know what to do for weapons to fight with, were it not for the errors of its friends; and so must soon fall before them. Besides, in real errors, things that are truly disagreeable to the rule of God's word, we cannot expect the divine protection, and that God will appear on our side, as if our errors were only supposed ones.

Since therefore the errors of the friends and promoters of such a glorious work of God are of such dreadful consequence; and seeing the devil, being sensible of this, is so assiduous, watchful, and subtile in his attempts with them, and has thereby been so successful to overthrow religion heretofore; certainly such persons ought to be exceeding circumspect and vigilant, diffident and jealous of themselves, and humbly dependent on the guidance of the good shepherd, 1 Pet. iv. 7. "Be sober, and watch unto prayer." And chap. v. 8. "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about." For persons to go on resolutely, in a kind of heat and vehemence, despising admonition and correction, being confident that they must be in the right because they are full of the Spirit, is directly contrary to the import of those words, be *sober*, be *vigilant*.

It is a mistake I have observed in some, by which they have been greatly exposed to their wounding, that they think, they are in no danger of going astray, or being misled by the devil, because they are near to God; and so have no jealous eye upon themselves, and neglect vigilance and circumspection, as needless in their case. They say, they do not think

that God will leave them to dishonour him, and wound religion, as long as they keep near to him. And I believe so too, as long as they keep near to God, so as to maintain an universal and diligent watch, and care to do their duty, avoid sin and snares with diffidence in themselves, and humble dependence and prayerfulness. But not merely because they are receiving blessed communications from God, in refreshing views of him, if at the same time they let down their watch, and are not jealous over their own hearts, by reason of its remaining blindness and corruption, and a subtile adversary. It is a grand error for persons to think they are out of danger from the devil, and a corrupt, deceitful heart, even in their highest flights, and most raised frames of spiritual joy. For persons, in such a confidence, to cease to be jealous of themselves, and to neglect watchfulness and care, is a presumption by which I have known many woefully ensnared. However highly we may be favoured with divine discoveries and comforts, yet, as long as we are in the world, we are in the enemy's country; and therefore that direction of Christ to his disciples is never out of date in this world, Luke xxi. 36. "Watch and pray always that you may be accounted worthy to escape all these things, and to stand before the Son of man." It was not out of date with the disciples to whom it was given, after they came to be full of the Holy Ghost, and "out of their bellies flowed rivers of living water," by that great effusion upon them that began on the day of Pentecost. And though God stands ready to protect his people, especially those that are near to him: yet he expects of all great care and labour, and that we should put on the whole armour of God, that we may stand in the evil day. To whatever spiritual privileges we are raised, we have no warrant to expect protection in any other way; for God has appointed this whole life to be all as a race or a battle; the state of rest, wherein we shall be so out of danger as to have no need of watching and fighting, is reserved for another world. I have known it in abundance of instances, that the devil has come in very remarkably, even in the midst of the most excellent frames. It may seem a great mystery that it should be so; but it is no greater mystery, than that Christ should be taken captive by the devil, and carried into the wilderness, immediately after the heavens had been opened to him, and the Holy Ghost descended like a dove upon him, and when he heard that comfortable, joyful voice from the Father, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." In like manner Christ in the heart of a Christian, is oftentimes as it were taken, and carried captive into a wilderness, presently after heaven has been as it were opened to the soul, and the Holy Ghost has descended upon it like a dove, and when God has been sweetly owning the believer, and testifying his favour to him as his beloved child.

It is therefore a great error and sin in some persons at this day, that they are fixed in some things which others account errors, and will not hearken to admonition and counsel, but are confident that they are in the right, because God is much with them. There were some such in the apostles' days. The apostle Paul, writing to the Corinthians, was sensible that some of them would not be easily convinced that they had been in any error, because they looked upon themselves as spiritual, or full of the Spirit of God, 1 Cor. xiv. 37, 38. "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandment of the Lord; but if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant."

And although those who are spiritual amongst us have no infallible apostle to admonish them, yet let me intreat them, by the love of Christ, calmly and impartially to weigh what may be said to them by one who is their hearty and fervent friend, (though an inferior worm,) in giving his humble opinion concerning the errors that have been committed by the zealous friends or promoters of this great work of God. In speaking of past errors, and those we are in danger of, I would, in the

First place, take notice of the *causes* whence the errors that attend a great revival of religion usually arise; and, as I go along, take notice of some particular errors that arise from each of those causes.

Secondly, Observe some errors that have been owing to the influence of several of those causes conjunctly.

The errors that attend a great revival of religion usually arise from these three things: 1. Undiscerned spiritual pride; 2. Wrong principles: and, 3. Ignorance of Satan's advantages and devices.

SECT. I.

One Cause of Errors attending a great Revival of Religion, is undiscerned Spiritual Pride.

The first and the worst cause of errors, that prevail in such a state of things, is *spiritual pride*. This is the main door by which the devil comes into the hearts of those who are zealous for the advancement of religion. It is the chief inlet of smoke from the bottomless pit, to darken the mind and mislead the judgment. This is the main handle by which the devil has hold of religious persons, and the chief source of all the mischief that he introduces, to clog and hinder a work of God.—This cause of error is the main spring, or at least

the main support of all the rest. Till this disease is cured, medicines are in vain applied to heal other diseases. It is by this that the mind defends itself in other errors, and guards itself against light, by which it might be corrected and reclaimed. The spiritually proud man is full of light already, he does not need instruction, and is ready to despise the offer of it. But, if this disease be healed, other things are easily rectified. The humble person is like a little child, he easily receives instruction; he is jealous over himself, sensible how liable he is to go astray, and therefore, if it be suggested to him that he does so, he is ready most narrowly and impartially to inquire. Nothing sets a person so much out of the devil's reach as humility, and so prepares the mind for true divine light without darkness, and so clears the eye to look on things as they truly are; Psalm xxv. 9, "The meek will he guide in judgment. And the meek will he teach his way." Therefore we should fight, neither with small nor with great, but with the king of Israel. Our first care should be to rectify the heart, and pull the beam out of our eye, and then we shall see clearly.

I know that a great many things at this day are very injuriously laid to the pride of those that are zealous in the cause of God. When any person appears, in any respect remarkably distinguished in religion from others; if he professes those spiritual comforts and joys that are greater than ordinary, or appears distinguishingly zealous in religion; if he exerts himself more than others in the cause of religion, or seems to be distinguished with success; ten to one but it will immediately awaken the jealousy of those about him. They will suspect (whether they have cause or no) that he is very proud of his goodness, and affects to have it thought that nobody is so good as he; and all his talk is heard, and all his behaviour beheld, with this prejudice. Those who are themselves cold and dead, and especially such as never had any experience of the power of godliness on their own hearts, are ready to entertain such thoughts of the best christians; which arises from a secret enmity against vital and fervent piety. But zealous christians should take heed lest this prove a snare to them, and the devil take advantage from it, to blind their eyes from beholding what there is indeed of this nature in their hearts, and make them think, because they are charged with pride wrongfully and from an ill spirit, in many things, that therefore it is so in every thing. Alas! how much pride have the best of us in our hearts! It is the worst part of the body of sin and death; the first sin that ever entered into the universe, and the last that is rooted out: it is God's most stubborn enemy!

The corruption of nature may all be resolved into two

things, *pride* and *worldly-mindedness*, the *devil* and the *beast*, or *self* and the *world*. These are the two pillars of Dagon's temple, on which the whole house leans. But the former of these is every way the worst part of the corruption of nature; it is the first-born son of the devil, and his image in the heart of man chiefly consists in it. It is the last thing in a sinner that is overborne by conviction, in order to conversion; and here is the saint's hardest conflict; the last thing over which he obtains a good degree of conquest, that which most directly militates against God, and it is most contrary to the Spirit of the Lamb of God. It is most like the devil its father, in a serpentine deceitfulness and secrecy; it lies deepest, is most active, and is most ready secretly to mix itself with every thing.

And, of all kinds of pride, spiritual pride is upon many accounts the most hateful, it is most like the devil; most like the sin he committed in a heaven of light and glory, where he was exalted high in divine knowledge, honour, beauty, and happiness. Pride is much more difficult to be discerned than any other corruption, because its nature very much consists in a person's having too high a thought of himself. No wonder that he who has too high a thought of himself, does not know it; for he necessarily thinks that the opinion he has of himself has just grounds, and therefore is not too high; if he thought such an opinion of himself was without just grounds, he would therein cease to have it. Those that are spiritually proud, have a high conceit of these two things, viz. their *light*, and their *humility:* both which are a strong prejudice against a discovery of their pride. Being proud of their *light*, that makes them not jealous of themselves; he who thinks a clear light shines around him, is not suspicious of an enemy lurking near him unseen, and then, being proud of their *humility*, that makes them least of all jealous of themselves in that particular, viz. as being under the prevalence of pride. There are many sins of the heart that are very secret in their nature, and difficultly discerned. The psalmist says, Psalm xix. 12. "Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults." But spiritual pride is the most secret of all sins. The heart is deceitful and unsearchable in nothing so much as in this matter; and there is no sin in the world, that men are so confident in. The very nature of it is to work self-confidence, and drive away jealousy of any evil of that kind. There is no sin so much like the devil as this for secrecy and subtilty, and appearing in a great many shapes undiscerned and unsuspected. It appears as an angel of light; takes occasion to arise from every thing; it perverts and abuses every thing, and even the exercises of real grace, and real humility, as an occasion to exert itself: it is a sin that has

as it were many lives; if you kill it, it will live still; if you mortify and suppress it in one shape, it rises in another; if you think it is all gone, yet it is there still. There are a great many kinds of it, that lie in different forms and shapes, one under another, and encompass the heart like the coats of an onion; if you pull off one, there is another underneath. We had need therefore to have the greatest watch imaginable over our hearts with respect to this matter, and to cry most earnestly to the great searcher of hearts for his help. He that trusts his own heart is a fool.

God's own people should be the more jealous of themselves with respect to this particular at this day, because the temptations that many have to this sin are exceeding great. The great and distinguishing privileges to which God admits many of his saints, and the high honours he puts on some ministers, are great trials of persons in this respect. It is true, that great degrees of the spiritual presence of God tends greatly to mortify pride and all corruption; but yet, though in the experience of such favours there be much to restrain pride one way, there is much to tempt and provoke it another; and we shall be in great danger thereby, without great watchfulness and prayerfulness. The angels that fell, while in heaven, had great honours and high privileges, in beholding the face of God, and viewing his infinite glory, to cause in them exercises of humility, and to keep them from pride; yet, through want of watchfulness in them, their great honour and heavenly privilege proved to be to them an undoing temptation to pride, though they had no principle of pride in their hearts to expose them. Let no saint, therefore, however eminent, and however near to God, think himself out of danger. He that thinks himself most out of danger, is indeed most in danger. The apostle Paul, who doubtless was as eminent a saint as any now, was not out of danger, even just after he was admitted to see God in the third heaven, 2 Cor. xii.; and yet doubtless, what he saw in heaven of the ineffable glory of the Divine Being, had a direct tendency to make him appear exceeding little and vile in his own eyes.

Spiritual pride in its own nature is so secret, that it is not so well discerned by immediate intuition on the thing itself, as by the effects and fruits of it; some of which I would mention, together with the contrary fruits of pure Christian humility. Spiritual pride disposes to speak of other persons' sins, their enmity against God and his people, the miserable delusion of hypocrites and their enmity against vital piety, and the deadness of some saints, with bitterness, or with laughter and levity, and an air of contempt; whereas pure Christian humility rather disposes, either to be silent about them, or to speak of them with grief and pity. Spiritual

pride is very apt to suspect others; whereas an humble saint is most jealous of himself, he is so suspicious of nothing in the world as he is of his own heart. The spiritually proud person is apt to find fault with other saints, that they are low in grace; and to be much in observing how cold and dead they are; and being quick to discern and take notice of their deficiencies. But the eminently humble Christian has so much to do at home, and sees so much evil in his own heart, and is so concerned about it, that he is not apt to be very busy with other hearts; he complains most of himself, and complains of his own coldness and lowness in grace. He is apt to esteem others better than himself, and is ready to hope that there is nobody but what has more love and thankfulness to God than he, and cannot bear to think that others should bring forth no more fruit to God's honour than he. Some who have spiritual pride mixed with high discoveries and great transports of joy, disposing them in an earnest manner to talk to others, are apt, in such frames, to be calling upon other Christians about them, and sharply reproving them for their being so cold and lifeless. There are others, who in their raptures are overwhelmed with a sense of their own vileness; and, when they have extraordinary discoveries of God's glory, are all taken up about their own sinfulness; and though they also are disposed to speak much and very earnestly, yet it is very much in blaming themselves, and exhorting fellow Christians, but in a charitable and humble manner. Pure Christian humility disposes a person to take notice of every thing that is good in others, and to make the best of it, and to diminish their failings; but to have his eye chiefly on those things that are bad in himself, and to take much notice of every thing that aggravates them.

In a contrariety to this, it has been the manner in some places, or at least the manner of some persons, to speak of almost every thing that they see amiss in others, in the most harsh, severe and terrible language. It is frequent with them to say of others' opinions or conduct or advice—or of their coldness, their silence, their caution, their moderation, their prudence, &c. that they are from the devil, or from hell; that such a thing is devilish or hellish, or cursed, and that such persons are serving the devil, or the devil is in them, that they are soul-murderers and the like; so that the words devil and hell are almost continually in their mouths. And such kind of language they will commonly use, not only towards wicked men, but towards them whom they themselves allow to be the true children of God, and also towards ministers of the gospel and others who are very much their superiors. And they look upon it as a virtue and high attainment thus to behave themselves. 'Oh,' say they, 'we must be plain-hearted and bold

for Christ, we must declare war against sin wherever wesee it, we must not mince the matter in the cause of God, andwhen speaking for Christ.' And to make any distinction in persons, or to speak the more tenderly, because that which is amiss is seen in a superior, they look upon as very mean for a follower of Christ when speaking in the cause of his master. What a strange device of the devil is here, to overthrow all Christian meekness and gentleness, and even all shew and appearance of it, and to defile the mouths of the children of God, and to introduce the langauge of common sailors among the followers of Christ, under a cloak of high sanctity and zeal and boldness for Christ! And it is a remarkable instance of the weakness of the human mind, and how much too cunning the devil is for us!

The grand defence of this way of talking is, That they say no more than what is true; they only speak the truth without mincing the matter; and that true Christians who have a great sight of the evil of sin, and acquaintance with their own hearts, know it to be true, and therefore will not be offended to hear such harsh expressions concerning them and their sins. It is only (say they) hypocrites, or cold and dead Christians, that are provoked and feel their enmity rise on such an occasion. But it is a grand mistake to think that we may commonly use all such language as represents the worst of each other, according to strict truth. It is really true, that every kind of sin, and every degree of it, is devilish and from hell, and is cursed, hellish, and condemned or damned. And if persons had a full sight of their hearts, they would think no terms too bad for them; they would look like beasts, like serpents, and like devils to themselves; they would be at a loss for language to express what they see in themselves. The worst terms they could think of would seem as it were faint to represent what they see in themselves. But shall a child therefore, from time to time, use such language concerning an excellent and eminently holy father or mother, as, That the devil is in them; that they have such and such devilish, cursed dispositions; that they commit every day hundreds of hellish, damned acts; and that they are cursed dogs, hell hounds and devils? And shall the meanest of the people be justified, in commonly using such language concerning the most excellent magistrates, or the most eminent ministers? I hope nobody has gone to this height. But the same pretences of boldness, plain-heartedness, and declared war against sin, will as well justify these things as the others. If we proceed in such a manner, on such principles as these, what a face will be introduced upon the church of Christ, the little beloved flock of that gentle shepherd the Lamb of God? What a sound shall we bring into the house of God, into the

family of his dear little children? How far off shall we soon banish that lovely appearance of humility, sweetness, gentleness, mutual honour, benevolence, complacence, and an esteem of others above themselves, which ought to clothe the children of God all over? Not but that Christians should watch over one another, and in any wise reprove one another, and do it plainly and faithfully; but it does not thence follow that dear brethren in the family of God, in rebuking one another, should use worse language than Michael the archangel durst use when rebuking the devil himself.

Christians who are but fellow-worms, ought at least to treat one another with as much humility and gentleness as Christ, who is infinitely above them, treats them. But how did Christ treat his disciples when they were so cold towards him, and so regardless of him, at the time when his soul was exceeding sorrowful even unto death—and he in a dismal agony was crying and sweating blood for them—and they would not watch with him and allow him the comfort of their company one hour in his great distress, though he once and again desired it of them? One would think that then was a proper time, if ever, to have reproved them for a devilish, hellish, cursed and damned slothfulness and deadness. But after what manner does Christ reprove them? Behold his astonishing gentleness! Says he, "What, could ye not watch with me one hour? The Spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." And how did he treat Peter when he was ashamed of his master, while he was made a mocking stock and a spitting stock for him? Why, he looked upon him with a look of love, and melted his heart. And though we read that Christ once turned and said unto Peter, on a certain occasion, "Get thee behind me, Satan;" and this may seem like an instance of harshness and severity in reproving Peter; yet I humbly conceive that this is by many taken wrong, and that this is indeed no instance of Christ's severity in his treatment of Peter, but on the contrary of his wonderful gentleness and grace, distinguishing between Peter and the devil in him, not laying the blame of what Peter had then said, or imputing it to him, but to the devil that influenced him. Christ saw the devil then present, secretly influencing Peter to do the part of a tempter to his master; and therefore Christ turned him about to Peter, in whom the devil then was, and spake to the devil, and rebuked him. Thus the grace of Christ does not behold iniquity in his people, imputes not what is amiss in them to them, but to sin that dwells in them, and to Satan that influences them.

Spiritual pride often disposes persons to singularity in external appearance, to affect a singular way of speaking, to use a different sort of dialect from others, or to be singular in

voice, countenance or behaviour. But he that is an eminently humble Christian, though he will be firm to his duty, however singular—going in the way that leads to heaven alone, though all the world forsake him—yet he delights not in singularity for singularity's sake. He does not affect to set up himself to be viewed and observed as one distinguished, as desiring to be accounted better than others—despising their company, or conformity to them—but on the contrary is disposed to become all things to all men, to yield to others, and conform to them and please them in every thing but sin. Spiritual pride commonly occasions a certain stiffness and inflexibility in persons, in their own judgment and their own ways; whereas the eminently humble person, though he be inflexible in his duty, and in those things wherein God's honour is concerned; and with regard to temptation to those things he apprehends to be sinful, though in never so small a degree, he is not at all of a yielding spirit, but is like a brazen wall; yet in other things he is of a pliable disposition, not disposed to set up his own opinion, or his own will; he is ready to pay deference to others' opinions, loves to comply with their inclinations, and has a heart that is tender and flexible like a little child. Spiritual pride disposes persons to affect separation, to stand at a distance from others, as being better than they; and loves the shew and appearance of the distinction. But, on the contrary, the eminently humble Christian is ready to look upon himself as not worthy that others should be united to him—to think himself more brutish than any man, and worthy to be cast out of human society—and especially unworthy of the society of God's children. And though he will not be a companion with one that is visibly Christ's enemy—but delights most in the company of lively Christians, choosing such for his companions, and will be most intimate with them, not delighting to spend much time in the company of those who seem to relish no conversation but about worldly things—yet he does not love the appearance of an open separation from visible Christians, as being a kind of distinct company from them who are one visible company with him by Christ's appointment; and will as much as possible shun all appearances of a superiority, or distinguishing himself as better than others. His universal benevolence delights in the appearance of union with his fellow-creatures, and will maintain it as much as he possibly can without giving open countenance to iniquity, or wounding his own soul. And herein he follows the example of his meek and lowly Redeemer, who did not keep up such a separation and distance as the Pharisees, but freely ate with publicans and sinners, that he might win them.

The eminently humble Christian is as it were clothed with lowliness, mildness, meekness, gentleness of spirit and

behaviour, and with a soft, sweet, condescending, winning air and deportment; these things are just like garments to him, he is clothed all over with them. 1 Pet. v. 5. "And be clothed with humility." Col. iii. 12. "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering." Pure Christian humility has no such thing as roughness, or contempt, or fierceness, or bitterness in its nature; it makes a person like a little child, harmless and innocent, that none need to be afraid of; or like a lamb, destitute of all bitterness, wrath, anger and clamour; agreeable to Eph. iv. 31. With such a spirit as this ought especially zealous ministers of the gospel to be clothed, and those that God is pleased to employ as instruments in his hands of promoting his work. They ought indeed to be thorough in preaching the word of God, without mincing the matter at all; in handling the sword of the Spirit, as the ministers of the Lord of hosts, they ought not to be mild and gentle; they are not to be gentle and moderate in searching and awaking the conscience, but should be sons of thunder. The word of God, which is in itself sharper than any two-edged sword, ought not to be sheathed by its ministers, but so used that its sharp edges may have their full effect, even to the dividing asunder soul and spirit, joints and marrow. Yet they should do it without judging particular persons, leaving it to conscience and the Spirit of God to make the particular application. But all their conversation should savour of nothing but lowliness and good-will, love and pity to all mankind; so that such a spirit should be like a sweet odour diffused around them wherever they go. They should be like lions to guilty consciences, but like lambs to men's persons. This would have no tendency to prevent the awakening of men's consciences, but on the contrary, would have a very great tendency to awaken them. It would make way for the sharp sword to enter; it would remove the obstacles, and make a naked breast for the arrow. Yea, the amiable Christ-like conversation of such ministers in itself, would terrify the consciences of men, as well as their terrible preaching; both would co-operate, to subdue the hard, and bring down the proud heart. If there had been constantly and universally observable such a behaviour as this in itinerant preachers, it would have terrified the consciences of sinners ten times as much as all the invectives and the censorious talk there has been concerning particular persons, for their opposition, hypocrisy, delusion, pharisaism, &c. These things in general have rather stupified sinners' consciences; they take them up, and make use of them as a shield, wherewith to defend themselves from the sharp arrows of the word that are shot by these preachers. The enemies of the present work have been glad of these things with all their hearts.

Many of the most bitter of them are probably such as in the beginning of this work had their consciences something galled and terrified with it; but these errors of awakening preachers are the things they chiefly made use of as plaisters to heal the sore that was made in their consciences.

Spiritual pride takes great notice of opposition and injuries that are received, and is apt to be often speaking of them, and to be much in taking notice of their aggravations, either with an air of bitterness or contempt. Whereas pure, unmixed Christian humility, disposes a person rather to be like his blessed Lord, when reviled, dumb, not opening his mouth, but committing himself in silence to him that judgeth righteously. The eminently humble Christian, the more clamorous and furious the world is against him, the more silent and still will he be; unless it be in his closet, and there he will not be still.—Our blessed Lord Jesus seems never to have been so silent as when the world compassed him round, reproaching, buffeting, and spitting on him, with loud and virulent outcries, and horrid cruelties. There has been a great deal too much talk of late, among many of the true and zealous friends of religion, about opposition and persecution. It becomes the followers of the Lamb of God, when the world is in an uproar about them, and full of clamour against them, not to raise another noise to answer it, but to be still and quiet. It is not beautiful, at such time, to have pulpits and conversation ring with the sound of persecution, persecution, or with abundant talk about Pharisees, carnal persecutors, and the seed of the serpent.—Meekness and quietness among God's people, when opposed and reviled, would be the surest way to have God remarkably to appear for their defence. It is particularly observed of Moses, on occasion of Aaron and Miriam envying him, and rising up in opposition against him, that he "was very meek, above all men upon the face of the earth," Numb. xii. 3. Doubtless because he remarkably shewed his meekness on that occasion, being wholly silent under the abuse. And how remarkable is the account that follows of God's being as it were suddenly roused to appear for his vindication? What high honour did he put upon Moses? and how severe were his rebukes of his opposers? The story is very remarkable, and worthy every one's observation. Nothing is so effectual to bring God down from heaven in the defence of his people, as their patience and meekness under sufferings. When Christ "girds his sword upon his thigh, with his glory and majesty, and in his majesty rides prosperously, his right hand teaching him terrible things, it is because of truth, and Meekness, and Righteousness," Psal. xlv. 3, 4. "God will cause judgment to be heard from heaven; the earth shall fear and be still, and God will arise

to judgment, to save all the *meek* of the earth, Psal. lxxvi. 8, 9. "He will lift up the meek, and cast the wicked down to the ground," Psal. cxlvii. 6. "He will reprove with equity for the meek of the earth, and will smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips will he slay the wicked," Isa. xi. 4. The great commendation that Christ gives the church of Philadelphia is, "Thou hast kept the word of my patience," Rev. iii. 10. And we may see what reward he promises her, in the preceding verse; "Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship at thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee." And thus it is that we might expect to have Christ appear for us, if under all the reproaches we are loaded with, we behaved ourselves with a lamb-like meekness and gentleness. But if our spirits are raised, and we are vehement and noisy with our complaints under colour of Christian zeal, this will be to take upon us our own defence, and God will leave it with us, to vindicate our cause as well as we can; yea, if we go on in a way of bitterness, and high censuring, it will be the way to have him rebuke us, and put us to shame before our enemies.

Here some may be ready to say, "It is not in our own cause that we are thus vehement, but it is in the cause of God, and the apostle directed the primitive Christians to "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints." But how was it that the primitive Christians contended earnestly for the faith? They defended the truth with arguments and a holy conversation, but yet gave their reasons with meekness and fear. They contended earnestly for the faith, by fighting violently against their own belief, and the corruptions of their hearts: yea, they resisted unto blood, striving against sin; but the blood that was shed in this earnest strife, was their own blood, and not the blood of their enemies. It was *in the cause of God* that Peter was so fierce, and drew his sword, and began to smite with it; but Christ bids him put up his sword again, telling him that they that take the sword shall perish by the sword; and while Peter wounds, Christ heals. They contend the most violently, and are the greatest conquerors in a time of persecution, who bear it with the greatest meekness and patience. Great humility improves even the reflections and reproaches of enemies, to put upon serious self-examination, whether or no there be not some just cause; whether they have not in some respect given occasion to the enemy to speak reproachfully. Whereas spiritual pride improves such reflections to make them the more bold and confident, and to go the greater lengths in that for which they are found fault with. I desire it may be considered.

whether there has been nothing amiss of late among the true friends of vital piety in this respect; and whether the words of David, when reviled by Michal, have not been misinterpreted and misapplied to justify them in it, when he said, "I will be yet more vile, and will be base in mine own sight." The import of his words is, that he would humble himself yet more before God, being sensible that he was far from being sufficiently abased; and he signifies this to Michal, that he longed to be yet lower, and had designed already to abase himself more in his behaviour.—Not that he would go the greater length, to shew his regardlessness of her revilings: that would be to exalt himself, and not to abase himself as more vile in his own sight.

Another effect of spiritual pride is a certain unsuitable, and self-confident boldness before God and men. Thus some, in their great rejoicings before God, have not paid a sufficient regard to that rule in Psal. ii. 11. They have not rejoiced with a reverential trembling, in a proper sense of the awful majesty of God, and the awful distance between him and them. And there has also been an improper boldness before men, that has been encouraged and defended, by a misapplication of that scripture, Prov. xxix. 25. "The fear of man bringeth a snare." As though it became all persons, high and low, men, women, and children, in all religious conversation, wholly to divest themselves of all manner of shamefacedness, modesty, or reverence towards man; which is a great error, and quite contrary to scripture. There is a fear of reverence that is due to some men, Rom. xiii. 7. "Fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour." And there is a fear of modesty, and shamefacedness in inferiors towards superiors, which is amiable, and required by Christian rules, 1 Pet. iii. 2. "While they behold your chaste conversation, coupled with fear;" and 1 Tim. ii. 9. "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety." The apostle means that this virtue shall have place, not only in civil communication, but also in spiritual communication, and in our religious concerns and behaviour, as is evident by what follows, ver. 11, 12. "Let the women learn in silence, with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." Not that I would hence infer that women's mouths should be shut up from Christian conversation; but all that I mean from it at this time is, that modesty, or shamefacedness, and reverence towards men, ought to have some place, even in our religious communication one with another. The same is also evident by 1 Pet. iii. 15. "Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you,

with meekness and fear." It is well if that very fear and shamefacedness, which the apostle recommends, have not sometimes been condemned under the name of a *cursed fear of man.*

It is beautiful for persons when they are at prayer as the mouth of others, to make God only their fear and their dread, and to be wholly forgetful of men present, who, let them be great or small, are nothing in the presence of the great God. And it is beautiful for a minister, when he speaks in the name of the Lord of hosts, to be bold, and to put off all fear of men. And it is beautiful in private Christians, though they are women and even children, to be bold in professing the faith of Christ, in the practice of all religion, and in owning God's hand in the work of his power and grace, without any fear of men; though they should be reproached as fools and madmen, frowned upon by great men, and cast off by parents and all the world. But for private Christians, women, and others, to instruct, rebuke, and exhort, with a like sort of boldness as becomes a minister when preaching, is not beautiful. Some have been bold in things that have really been errors; and have gloried in their boldness in practising them, though odd and irregular. And those who have gone the greatest lengths in these things, have been by some most highly esteemed, as appearing bold for the Lord Jesus Christ, and fully on his side; while others who have professed to be godly, and who have condemned such things, have been spoken of as enemies of the cross of Christ, or at least very cold and dead; and thus many, that of themselves were not inclined to such practices, have by this means been driven on, being ashamed to be behind, and accounted poor soldiers for Christ.

Another effect of spiritual pride is to make the subject of it *assuming*. It oftentimes makes it natural to persons so to act and speak, as though in a special manner it belonged to them to be taken notice of and much regarded. It is very natural to a person that is much under the influence of spiritual pride, to take all the respect that is paid him. If others shew a disposition to submit to him, and yield him the difference of a preceptor, he is open to it, and freely admits it; yea, it is natural for him to expect such treatment, and to take much notice if he fails of it, and to have an ill opinion of others that do not pay him that which he looks upon as his prerogative. He is apt to think that it belongs to him to speak, and to clothe himself with a judicial and dogmatical air in conversation, and to take it upon him, as what belongs to him, to give forth his sentence, and to determine and decide. Whereas pure Christian humility *vaunteth not itself, doth not behave itself unseemly*, and is apt to *prefer others in honour*. One under the influence

of spiritual pride is more apt to instruct others, than to inquire for himself, and naturally puts on the airs of a master. Whereas one that is full of pure humility, naturally has on the air of a disciple; his voice is, "What shall I do? What shall I do that I may live more to God's honour? What shall I do with this wicked heart?" He is ready to receive instruction from any body, agreeable to Jam. i. 19. "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak." The eminently humble Christian thinks he wants help from every body, whereas he that is spiritually proud thinks that every body wants his help. Christian humility, under a sense of others' misery, intreats and beseeches; but spiritual pride affects to command, and warn with authority. There ought to be the utmost watchfulness against all such appearances of spiritual pride, in all that profess to have been the subjects of this work, and especially in the promoters of it, but above all in itinerant preachers. The most eminent gifts, and highest tokens of God's favour and blessing, will not excuse them.—Alas! What is man at his best estate! What is the most highly favoured Christian, or the most eminent and successful minister, that he should now think he is sufficient for something, and somebody to be regarded; and that he should go forth, and act among his fellow-creatures as if he were wise and strong and good!

Ministers who have been the principal instruments of carrying on this glorious revival of religion, and whom God has made use of to bring up his people as it were out of Egypt, should take heed, that they do not provoke God, as Moses did, by assuming too much to themselves, and by their intemperate zeal to shut them out from seeing the good things that God is going to do for his church in this world. The fruits of Moses's unbelief, which provoked God to shut him out of Canaan, and not to suffer him to partake of those great things God was about to do for Israel, were chiefly these two things:—First, His mingling bitterness with his zeal. He had a great zeal for God, and he could not bear to see the intolerable stiffneckedness of the people, that they did not acknowledge the work of God, and were not convinced by all his wonders that they had seen. But human passion was mingled with his zeal, Psal. cvi. 32, 33. "They angered him also at the waters of strife; so that it went ill with Moses for their sakes: Because they provoked his spirit, so that he spake unadvisedly with his lips." *Hear now, ye rebels,* says he, with bitterness of language.—Secondly, He behaved himself, and spake with an assuming air. He assumed too much to himself; "Hear now, ye rebels, must we fetch water out of this rock?" Spiritual pride wrought in Moses at that time. His temptations to it were very great; for he had had great discoveries of God, and had been privileged with intimate and

sweet communion with him, and God had made him the instrument of great good to his church. But though he was so humble a person, and, by God's own testimony, meek above all men upon the face of the whole earth, yet his temptations were too strong for him. Which surely should make our young ministers, that have of late been highly favoured, and have had great success, exceeding careful, and distrustful of themselves. Alas! how far are we from having the strength of holy, meek, aged Moses. The temptation at this day is exceeding great to both those errors that Moses was guilty of. There is great temptation to bitterness and corrupt passion with zeal; for there is so much unreasonable opposition made against this glorious work of God, and so much stiffneckedness manifested in multitudes of this generation, notwithstanding all the great and wonderful works in which God has passed before them, that it greatly tends to provoke the spirits of such as have the interest of this work at heart, so as to move them to speak unadvisedly with their lips. And there is also great temptation to an assuming behaviour in some persons. When a minister has greatly succeeded from time to time, and so draws the eyes of the multitude upon him, when he sees himself followed, resorted to as an oracle—and people ready to adore him, and as it were to offer sacrifice to him, as it was with Paul and Barnabas at Lystra—it is almost impossible for a man to avoid taking upon him the airs of a master, or some extraordinary person; a man had need to have a great stock of humility, and much divine assistance, to resist the temptation. But the greater our dangers are, the more ought to be our watchfulness, prayerfulness, and diffidence, lest we bring ourselves into mischief. Fishermen who have been very successful, having caught a great many fish, had need to be careful that they do not at length begin to burn incense to their net. And we should take warning by Gideon, who after God had highly favoured and exalted him, and made him the instrument of working a wonderful deliverance for his people, at length made a god of the spoils of his enemies, which became a snare to him and to his house, so as to prove the ruin of his family.

All young ministers, in this day of bringing up the ark of God, should take warning by the example of a young Levite in Israel, Uzza the son of Abinadab. He seemed to have a real concern for the ark of God, and to be zealous and engaged in his mind on that joyful occasion of bringing it up. God made him an instrument to bring the ark out of its long-continued obscurity in Kirjath-jearim, and he was succeeded to bring it a considerable way towards Mount Zion; but for his want of humility, reverence, and circumspection, and assuming or taking too much upon him, God broke forth

upon him, and smote him for his error, so that he never lived to see and partake of the great joy of his church on occasion of the carrying up the ark into Mount Zion, and the great blessings of heaven upon Israel consequent upon it. Ministers employed to carry on this work, have been chiefly of the younger sort, who have doubtless (as Uzza had) a real concern for the ark; and it is evident that they are much animated and engaged in their minds (as he was) in this joyful day of bringing up the ark.—They are afraid what will become of the ark under the conduct of its ministers: They see it shakes, and they are afraid these blundeirng oxen will throw it. Some of them, it is to be feared, have been over officious on this occasion, have assumed too much to themselves, and have been bold to put forth their hand to take hold of the ark, as though they were the only fit and worthy persons to defend it. If young ministers had great humility, without a corrupt mixture, it would dispose them especially to treat aged ministers with respect and reverence, as their fathers, notwithstanding that a sovereign God may have given themselves greater assistance and success, 1 Pet. v. 5. "Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder: yea, all of you be subject one to another; and be clothed with humility; for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble." Lev. xix. 32. "Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man, and fear thy God: I am the Lord."

As spiritual pride disposes persons to assume much to themselves, so it also disposes them to treat others with neglect. On the contrary, pure Christian humility disposes persons to honour all men, agreeable to that rule, 1 Pet. ii. 17. There has been in some, who I believe are true friends of religion, too great appearance of this fruit of spiritual pride, in their treatment of those whom they looked upon to be carnal men; and particularly in refusing to enter into any discourse or reasoning with them. Indeed, to spend a great deal of time in jangling and warm debates about religion, is not the way to propagate, but to hinder it; and some are so dreadfully set against this work, that it is a dismal task to dispute with them; all that one can say is utterly in vain. I have found it so by experience. To enter into disputes about religion, at some times, is quite unseasonable; particularly in meetings for religious conference, or exercises of worship. But yet we ought to be very careful that we do not refuse to discourse with men, with any appearance of a supercilious neglect, as though we counted them not worthy to be regarded: on the contrary, we should condescend to carnal men, as Christ has condescended to us, to bear with our unteachableness and stupidity. He still follows us with instructions, line upon line, and precept upon precept, saying, "Come let us reason together:" setting

light before us, and using all manner of arguments with us, and waiting upon such dull scholars, as it were hoping that we should receive light. We should be ready with meekness and calmness, without hot disputing, to give our reasons, why we think this work is the work of God, to carnal men when they ask us, and not turn them by as not worthy to be talked with; as the apostle directed the primitive Christians to be ready to give a reason of the Christian faith and hope to the enemies of Christianity, 1 Pet. iii. 15. "Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear." And we ought not to condemn all reasoning about things of religion under the name of carnal reason. For my part, I desire no better than that those who oppose this work should fairly submit to have the cause betwixt us tried by strict reasoning.

One qualification that the scripture speaks of once and again, as requisite in a minister, is, that he should be (διδακτικον) *apt to teach*, 1 Tim. iii. 2. And the apostle seems to explain what he means by it, in 2 Tim. ii. 24, 25, or at least there expresses one thing that he intends by it, viz. That a minister should be ready, meekly to condescend to and instruct opposers; "And the servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance, to the acknowledging of the truth."

SECT. II.

Another cause of errors in conduct attending a religious revival, is the adoption of wrong principles.

One erroneous principle, than which scarce any has proved more mischievous to the present glorious work of God, is a notion that it is God's manner in these days, to guide his saints, at least some that are more eminent, by inspiration, or immediate revelation. They suppose he makes known to them what shall come to pass hereafter, or what it is his will that they should do, by impressions made upon their minds, either with or without texts of scripture; whereby something is made known to them, that is not taught in the scripture. By such a notion the devil has a great door opened for him; and if once this opinion should come to be fully yielded to, and established in the church of God, Satan would have opportunity thereby to set up himself as the guide and oracle of God's people, and to have *his* word regarded as their infallible rule, and so to lead them

where he would, and to introduce what he pleased, and soon to bring the Bible into neglect and contempt.——Late experience, in some instances, has shewn that the tendency of this notion is to cause persons to esteem the Bible as in a great measure useless.

This error will defend and support all errors. As long as a person has a notion that he is guided by immediate direction from heaven, it makes him incorrigible and impregnable in all his misconduct. For what signifies it, for poor blind worms of the dust, to go to argue with a man, and endeavour to convince him and correct him, that is guided by the immediate counsels and commands of the great JEHOVAH? This great work of God has been exceedingly hindered by this error; and, till we have quite taken this handle out of the devil's hands, the work of God will never go on without great clogs and hinderances.—Satan will always have a vast advantage in his hands against it, and as he has improved it hitherto, so he will do so still. And it is evident, that the devil knows the vast advantage he has by it, that makes him exceeding loth to let go his hold.

It is strange what a disposition there is in many well-disposed and religious persons to fall in with and hold fast this notion. It is enough to astonish one, that such multiplied, plain instances of the failing of such supposed revelations in the event, do not open every one's eyes. I have seen so many instances of the failing of such impressions, that would almost furnish a history. I have been acquainted with them when made under all kinds of circumstances, and have seen them fail in the event, when made with such circumstances as have been fairest and brightest, and most promising. They have been made upon the minds of apparently eminent saints, and with an excellent heavenly frame of spirit yet continued, and made with texts of scripture that seemed exceeding apposite, yea, many texts following one another, extraordinarily and wonderfully brought to the mind, and the impressions repeated over and over; and yet all has most manifestly come to nothing, to the full conviction of the persons themselves. God has in so many instances of late, in his providence, covered such things with darkness, that one would think it should be enough quite to blank the expectations of those who have been ready to think highly of such things. It seems to be a testimony of God, that he has no design of reviving revelations in his church, and a rebuke from him to the groundless expectations of it.

It seems to me that Zech. xiii. 5, is a prophecy concerning ministers of the gospel in the latter and glorious day of the Christian church, (which is evidently spoken of in this and the foregoing chapters.) The words, I apprehend,

are to be interpreted in a spiritual sense. "I am an husbandman:" the work of ministers is very often, in the New Testament, compared to the business of the husbandmen, that take care of God's husbandry, to whom he lets out his vineyard, and sends them forth to labour in his field, where one plants and another waters, one sows and another reaps; so ministers are called labourer's in God's harvest. And as it is added, "Men taught me to keep cattle from my youth;" so the work of a minister is very often in scripture represented by the business of a shepherd or pastor. And whereas it is said, "I am no prophet; but man taught me from my youth:" it is as much as to say, I do not pretend to have received my skill, whereby I am fitted for the business of a pastor or shepherd in the church of God, by immediate inspiration, but by education, by being trained up to the business by human learning, and instructions received from my youth or childhood, by ordinary means.

And why cannot we be contented with the divine oracles, that holy, pure word of God, which we have in such abundance and clearness, now since the canon of scripture is completed? Why should we desire to have any thing added to them by impulses from above? Why should we not rest in that standing rule that God has given to his church, which, the apostle teaches us, is surer than a voice from heaven? And why should we desire to make the scripture speak more to us than it does? Or why should any desire a higher kind of intercourse with heaven, than by having the Holy Spirit given in his sanctifying influences, infusing and exciting grace and holiness, love and joy, which is the highest kind of intercourse that the saints and angels in heaven have with God, and the chief excellency of the glorified man Christ Jesus?

Some that follow impulses and impressions indulge a notion, that they do no other than follow the guidance of God's word, because the impression is made with a text of scripture that comes to their mind. But they take that text as it is impressed on their minds, and improve it as a new revelation to all intents and purposes; while the text, as it is in the Bible, implies no such thing, and they themselves do not suppose that any such revelation was contained in it before. Suppose, for instance, that text should come into a person's mind with strong impression, Acts ix. 6. "Arise, and go into the city; and it shall be told thee what thou must do;" and he should interpret it as an immediate signification of the will of God, that he should now forthwith go to such a neighbouring town, and there he should meet with a discovery of his duty. If such things as these are revealed by the impression of these words, it is to all intents a new revelation, not the less because certain words of scripture are made

use of in the case. Here are propositions or truths entirely new, that those words do not contain. These propositions, That it is God's mind and will, that such a person by name should arise at such a time, and go to such a place, and that there he should meet with discoveries, are entirely new propositions, wholly different from those contained in that text of scripture. They are no more implied in the words themselves, without a new revelation, than it is implied that he should arise and go to any other place, or that any other person should arise and go to that place. The propositions, supposed to be now revealed, are as really different from those contained in that scripture, as they are from the propositions contained in that text, Gen. v. 6. "And Seth lived an hundred and five years, and begat Enos." This is quite a different thing from the Spirit's enlightening the mind to understand the words of God, and know what is contained and revealed in them, and what consequences may justly be drawn from them, and to see how they are applicable to our case and circumstances, which is done without any new revelation, only by enabling the mind to understand and apply a revelation already made.

Those texts of scripture that speak of the children of God as *led by the Spirit*, have been by some brought to defend such impulses; particularly Rom. viii. 14. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God;" and Gal. v. 18. "But if ye are led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law." But these texts themselves confute them that bring them; for it is evident that the leading of the Spirit which the apostle speaks of is peculiar to the children of God, and that natural men cannot have; for he speaks of it as a sure evidence of their being the sons of God, and not under the law. But a leading or directing of a person by immediately revealing to him where he should go, or what shall hereafter come to pass, or what shall be the future consequence of his doing thus or thus, if there be any such thing in these days, is not of the nature of the gracious leading of the Spirit of God, peculiar to God's children. It is no more than a common gift; there is nothing in it but what natural men are capable of, and many of them have had in the days of inspiration. A man may have ten thousand such revelations and directions from the Spirit of God, and yet not have a jot of grace in his heart. It is no more than the gift of prophecy, which immediately reveals what will be, or should be hereafter; but this is only a common gift, as the apostle expressly shews, 1 Cor. xiii. 2, 8. If a person has any thing revealed to him from God, or is directed to any thing by a voice from heaven, or a whisper, or words immediately suggested to his mind, there is nothing of the nature of grace merely in this: it is of the nature of a common influence of the Spirit,

and is but dross in comparison of the excellency of that gracious leading of the Spirit that the saints have. Such a way of being directed where one shall go, and what he shall do, is no more than what Balaam had from God, who from time to time revealed to him what he should do; so that he was in this sense led by the Spirit for a considerable time. There is *a more excellent way* in which the Spirit leads *the sons of God*, that natural men cannot have; and that is by inclining them to do the will of God, and go in the shining path of truth and Christian holiness, from a holy heavenly disposition, which the Spirit of God gives them, and which inclines and leads them to those things that are excellent and agreeable to God's mind, whereby they "are transformed by the renewing of their minds, and prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God," Rom. xii. 2. And so the Spirit of God does in a gracious manner teach the saints their duty; and he teaches them in a higher manner than ever Balaam, or Saul, or Judas were taught. The Spirit of God enlightens them with respect to their duty, by making their eye single and pure, whereby the whole body is full of light. The sanctifying influence of the Spirit of God rectifies the taste of the soul, whereby it savours those things that are of God, and naturally relishes and delights in those things that are holy and agreeable to God's mind; and, like one of a distinguishing taste, it chooses those things that are good and wholesome, and rejects those that are evil. The sanctified ear tries words, and the sanctified heart tries actions, as the mouth tastes meat. And thus the Spirit of God leads and guides the meek in his way, agreeable to his promises; he enables them to understand the commands and counsels of his word, and rightly to apply them. Christ blames the Pharisees that they had not this holy distinguishing taste, to discern and distinguish what was right and wrong. Luke xii. 57, "Yea, and why even of your own selves judge ye not what is right?"

The leading of the Spirit which God gives his children, and which is peculiar to them, is that teaching them his statutes, and causing them to understand the way of his precepts, which the psalmist so very often prays for, especially in the 119th psalm: and not in giving them *new statutes* and *new precepts*. He graciously gives them eyes to see, and ears to hear, and hearts to understand; he causes them to understand the fear of the Lord, and "so brings the blind by a way they knew not, and leads them in paths that they had not known, and makes darkness light before them, and crooked things straight." So the assistance of the Spirit in praying and preaching, seems by some to have been greatly misunderstood, and they have sought after a miraculous assistance of inspiration, by the immediate suggesting of words to them, by such gifts and

influences of the Spirit, in praying and teaching, as the apostle speaks of, 1 Cor. xiv. 14, 26. (which many natural men had in those days,) instead of a gracious holy assistance of the Spirit of God, which is the far *more excellent way*; (as 1 Cor. xii. 31. and xiii. 1.) The gracious and most excellent assistance of the Spirit of God in praying and preaching, is not by immediately suggesting words to the apprehension, which may be with a cold dead heart; but by warming the heart, and filling it with a great sense of things to be spoken, and with holy affections, that these may suggest words. Thus indeed the Spirit of God may be said, indirectly and mediately, to suggest words to us, to indite our petitions for us, and to teach the preacher what to say; he fills the heart, and that fills the mouth. We know that when men are greatly affected in any matter, and their hearts are very full, it fills them with matter for speech, and makes them eloquent upon that subject; and much more have spiritual affections this tendency, for many reasons that might be given. When a person is in a holy and lively frame in secret prayer, or in Christian conversation, it will wonderfully supply him with matter, and with expressions, as every true Christian knows; and it has the like tendency to enable a person in public prayer and preaching. And, if he has these holy influences of the Spirit on his heart in a high degree, nothing in the world will have so great a tendency to make both the matter and the manner of his public performances excellent and profitable. But, since there is no immediate suggesting of words from the Spirit of God to be expected or desired, they who neglect and despise study and premeditation, in order to a preparation for the pulpit, in such an expectation, are guilty of presumption: though doubtless it may be lawful for some persons, in some cases, (and they may be called to it,) to preach with very little study; and the Spirit of God, by the heavenly frame of heart that he gives them, may enable them to do it to excellent purpose. Besides this most excellent way of the Spirit of God assisting ministers in public performances, which (considered as the preacher's privilege) far excels inspiration, there is a common assistance which natural men may have in these days, and which the godly may have intermingled with a gracious assistance, which is also very different from inspiration, and that is his assisting natural principles; as the natural apprehension, reason, memory, conscience, and natural affection.

But, to return to the head of impressions and immediate revelations; many lay themselves open to a delusion by expecting direction from heaven in this way, and waiting for it. In such a case it is easy for persons to imagine that they have it. They are perhaps at a loss concerning something,

undetermined what they shall do, or what course they shall take in some affair; and they pray to God to direct them, and make known to them his mind and will: and then, instead of expecting to be directed, by being assisted in considering the rules of God's word, his providence, and their circumstances, to look on things in a true light, and justly to weigh them, they are waiting for some secret immediate influence, unaccountably swaying their minds, and turning their thoughts or inclinations that way in which God would have them to go. Hereby they are exposed to two things; first, they lay themselves open to the devil, and give him a fair opportunity to lead them where he pleases; for they stand ready to follow the first extraordinary impulse that they shall have, groundlessly concluding it is from God. And, secondly, they are greatly exposed to be deceived by their own imaginations: for such an expectation awakens and quickens the imagination: and that oftentimes is called an uncommon impression, that is no such thing; and they ascribe that to the agency of some invisible being, which is owing only to themselves.

Again, another way that many have been deceived, is by drawing false conclusions from true premises. Many true and eminent saints have been led into mistakes and snares, by arguing that they have prayed in faith. They have indeed been greatly assisted in prayer for such a particular mercy, and have had the true spirit of prayer in exercise in their asking it of God: But they have concluded more from these premises than is a just consequence from them. That they have thus prayed is a sure sign that their prayer is accepted and heard, and that God will give a gracious answer according to his own wisdom, and that the particular thing asked shall be given, or that which is equivalent; this is a just consequence from it.—But it is not inferred by any new revelation now made, but by the promises made to the prayer of faith in the holy scriptures. But that God will answer them in that individual thing they ask, if it be not a thing promised in God's word, or they do not certainly know that it is what will be most for the good of God's church, and the advancement of Christ's kingdom and glory, nor whether it will be best for them, is more than can be justly concluded from it. If God remarkably meets with one of his children while he is praying for a particular mercy of great importance, for himself or some other person, or any society of men, and does by the influences of his Spirit greatly humble him, and empty him of himself in his prayer, and manifests himself remarkably in his excellency, sovereignty and all-sufficient power and grace in Jesus Christ —and in a remarkable manner enables the person to come to him for that mercy, poor in spirit, and with humble resignation to God, and with a great degree of faith in the divine suffi-

ciency, and the sufficiency of Christ's mediation—that person has indeed a great deal the more reason to hope that God will grant that mercy, than otherwise he would have. The greater probability is justly inferred, agreeable to the promises of the holy scripture, in that such a prayer is accepted and heard; and it is much more probable that a prayer that is heard will be returned with a particular mercy that is asked, than one that is not so. And there is no reason at all to doubt, but that God sometimes especially enables to the exercises of faith, when the minds of his saints are engaged in thoughts of, and prayer for, some particular blessing they greatly desire; *i. e.* God is pleased especially to give them a believing frame, a sense of his fulness, and a spirit of humble dependence on him, at such times. When they are thinking of and praying for such mercy, he gives them a particular sense of his ability, and of the sufficiency of his power, to overcome obstacles, and the sufficiency of his mercy and of the blood of Christ for the removal of the guilt that is in the way of the bestowment of such a mercy, in particular. When this is the case, it makes the probability still much greater, that God intends to bestow the particular mercy sought, in his own time, and his own way. But here is nothing of the nature of a revelation in the case, but only a drawing rational conclusions from the particular manner and circumstances of the ordinary gracious influences of God's Spirit. And as God is pleased sometimes to give his saints particular exercises of faith in his sufficiency, with regard to particular mercies; so he is sometimes pleased to make use of his word in order to it, and helps the actings of faith with respect to such a mercy. The strengthening of their faith in God's sufficiency, in this case, is therefore a just improvement of such scriptures; it is no more than what those scriptures, as they stand in the Bible, hold forth. But to take them as new whispers or revelations from heaven, is not making a just improvement of them. If persons thus have a spirit of prayer remarkably given them, concerning a particular mercy, from time to time, so as evidently to be assisted to act faith in God, in that particular, in a very distinguishing manner; the argument in some cases may be very strong, that God does design to grant that mercy, not from any revelation now made of it, but from such a kind and manner of the ordinary influence of his Spirit with respect to that thing.

But here a great deal of caution and circumspection must be used in drawing inferences of this nature. There are many ways by which persons may be misled and deluded. The ground on which some expect that they shall receive the thing they have asked for, is rather a strong imagination, than any true humble faith in the Divine sufficiency. They have a strong persuasion that the thing asked shall be granted (which they can give no reason for) without any remarkable discovery

of that glory and fulness of God and Christ, that is the ground of faith. And sometimes the confidence that their prayers shall be answered, is only a self-righteous confidence, and no true faith. They have a high conceit of themselves as eminent saints and special favourites of God, and to have also a high conceit of the prayers they have made, because they were much enlarged and affected in them; and hence they are positive in it, that the thing will come to pass. And sometimes when once they have conceived such a notion, they grow stronger and stronger in it; and this they think is from an immediate Divine hand upon their minds to strengthen their confidence; whereas it is only by their dwelling in their minds on their own excellency, and high experiences, and great assistances, whereby they look brighter and brighter in their own eyes. Hence it is found by observation and experience, that nothing in the world exposes so much to enthusiasm as spiritual pride and self-righteousness.

In order to drawing a just inference from the supposed assistance we have had in prayer for a particular mercy, and judging of the probability of the bestowment of that individual mercy, many things must be considered. We must consider the importance of the mercy sought, and the principle whence we so earnestly desire it; how far it is good, and agreeable to the mind and will of God; the degree of love to God that we exercised in our prayer; the degree of discovery that is made of the divine sufficiency, and the degree in which our assistance is manifestly distinguishing with respect to that mercy.—And there is nothing of greater importance in the argument than the degree of humility, poverty of spirit, self-emptiness and resignation to the holy will of God, exercised in seeking that mercy. Praying for a particular mercy with much of these things, I have often seen blessed with a remarkable bestowment of the particular thing asked for. From what has been said, we may see which way God may, only by the ordinary gracious influences of his Spirit, sometimes give his saints special reason to hope for the bestowment of a particular mercy they prayed for, and which we may suppose he oftentimes gives eminent saints, who have great degrees of humility, and much communion with God. And here, I humbly conceive, some eminent servants of Jesus Christ that we read of in ecclesiastical story, have been led into a mistake; and, through want of distinguishing such things as these from immediate revelations, have thought that God has favoured them, in some instances, with the same kind of divine influences that the apostles and prophets had of old.

Another erroneous principle that some have embraced, and which has been a source of many errors in their conduct, is, That persons ought always to do whatsoever the Spirit of God (though but indirectly) inclines them to. Indeed the

Spirit of God is in itself infinitely perfect, and all his immediate actings, simply considered, are perfect, and there can be nothing wrong in them; and therefore all that the Spirit of God inclines us to directly and immediately, without the intervention of any other cause that shall pervert and misimprove what is from him, ought to be done. But there may be many things, disposition to do which may indirectly be from the Spirit of God, that we ought not to do. The disposition in general may be good, and from the Spirit of God; but the particular determination of that disposition, as to particular actions, objects and circumstances, may be from the intervention or interposition of some infirmity, blindness, inadvertence, deceit or corruption of ours. So that although the disposition in general ought to be allowed and promoted, and all those actings of it that are simply from God's Spirit, yet the particular ill direction or determination of that disposition, which is from some other cause, ought not to be followed.

As for instance, the Spirit of God may cause a person to have a dear love to another, and so a great desire of and delight in his comfort, ease and pleasure. This disposition in general is good, and ought to be followed; but yet through the intervention of indiscretion, or some other bad cause, it may be ill directed, and have a bad determination, as to particular acts; and the person indirectly, through that real love he has to his neighbour, may kill him with kindness; he may do that out of sincere good-will to him, which may tend to ruin him.—A good disposition may through some inadvertence or delusion, strongly incline a person to that which, if he saw all things as they are, would be most contrary to that disposition. The true loyalty of a general, and his zeal for the honour of his prince, may exceedingly animate him in war; but this good disposition, through indiscretion and mistake, may push him forward to those things that give the enemy great advantage, and may expose him and his army to ruin, and may tend to the ruin of his master's interest.

The apostle does evidently suppose that the Spirit of God in his extraordinary, immediate and miraculous influences on men's minds, may in some respect excite inclinations, which, if gratified, would tend to confusion, and therefore must sometimes be restrained, and in their exercise must be under the government of discretion; 1 Cor. xiv. 31—33. "For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted. And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints." Here, by *the spirits of the prophets*, according to the known phraseology of the apostle, is meant the Spirit of God acting in the prophets, according to those special gifts with which each one was endued. And here

it is plainly implied that the Spirit of God, thus operating in them, may be an occasion of their having sometimes an inclination to do that, in the exercise of those gifts, which it was not proper, decent or profitable that they should; and that therefore the inclination, though indirectly from the Spirit of God, should be restrained; and that it ought to be subject to the discretion of the prophets, as to the particular time and circumstances of its exercise.

I make no doubt but that it is possible for a minister to have by the Spirit of God such a sense of the importance of eternal things, and of the misery of mankind—so many of whom are exposed to eternal destruction—together with such a love to souls, that he might find in himself a disposition to spend all his time, day and night, in warning, exhorting and calling upon men; and so that he must be obliged as it were to do violence to himself ever to refrain, so as to give himself any opportunity to eat, drink or sleep. And so I believe there may be a disposition, in like manner, indirectly excited in lay-persons, through the intervention of their infirmity, to do what only belongs to ministers; yea, to do those things that would not become either ministers or people. Through the influence of the Spirit of God, together with want of discretion, and some remaining corruption, women and children might feel themselves inclined to break forth aloud to great congregations, warning and exhorting the whole multitude; and to scream in the streets, or to leave their families, and go from house to house, earnestly exhorting others; but yet it would by no means follow that it was their duty to do these things, or that they would not have a tendency to do ten times as much hurt as good.

Another wrong principle, from whence have arisen errors in conduct, is, that whatsoever is found to be of present and immediate benefit may and ought to be practised, without looking forward to future consequences. Some persons seem to think that it sufficiently justifies any thing they say or do, that it is found to be for present edification; it assists and promotes their present affection, and therefore they think they should not concern themselves about future consequences, but leave them with God. Indeed in things that are in themselves our duty, being required by moral rules, or absolute positive commands of God, they must be done, and future consequences must be left with God; our discretion takes no place here: but in other things we are to be governed by discretion, and must not only look at the present good, but our view must be extensive, and we must look at the consequences of things. It is the duty of ministers especially to exercise this discretion. In things wherein they are not determined by an absolute rule, and not enjoined them by a wisdom superior to their own,

Christ has left them to their own discretion, with that general rule, that they should exercise the utmost wisdom they can obtain, in pursuing that which, upon the best view of the consequences of things, will tend most to the advancement of his kingdom. This is implied in those words of Christ to his disciples, when he sent them forth to preach the gospel, Matth. x. 16. "Be ye wise as serpents."

The scripture always represents the work of a gospel-minister by those employments that especially require a wise foresight of, and provision for future events and consequences. So it is compared to the business of a steward, which in an eminent manner requires forecast; as, for instance, a wise laying in of provision for the supply of the needs of the family, according to its future necessities. So it is compared to the business of a husbandman, that almost wholly consists in things done with a view to the future fruits and consequences of his labour. The husbandman's discretion and forecast is eloquently set forth in Isa. xxviii. 24—26. "Doth the plowman plow all day to sow? doth he open and break the clods of his ground? When he hath made plain the face thereof, doth he not cast abroad the fitches, and scatter the cummin, and cast in the principal wheat, and the appointed barley, and the rye in their place? For his God doth instruct him to discretion, and doth teach him." So the work of the ministry is compared to that of a wise builder or architect, who has a comprehensive view; and for whom it is necessary, that, when he begins a building, he should have at once a view of the whole frame, and all the future parts of the structure, even to the pinnacle, that all may be fitly framed together. So also it is compared to the business of a trader or merchant, who is to gain by trading; a business that exceedingly requires forecast, and without which it is never like to be followed with success for any long time. So it is represented by the business of a fisherman, which depends on peculiar skill; and to that of a soldier, which perhaps, above any other secular business, requires great foresight, and a wise provision for future events and consequences.

And particularly, ministers ought not to be careless how much they discompose the minds of natural men, or how great an uproar they raise in the carnal world, and so lay blocks in the way of the propagation of religion. This certainly is not to follow the example of the zealous apostle Paul, who though he would not depart from his duty to please carnal men, yet, wherein he might with a good conscience, exceedingly laid out himself to please them. He avoided raising in the multitude, prejudices, oppositions and tumults against the gospel; and looked upon it as of great consequence. 1 Cor. x. 32, 33. "Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor

to the church of God: Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved." Yea, he declares that he laid himself out so much for this, that he made himself a kind of servant to all sorts of men, conforming to their customs and various humours in every thing wherein he might, even in things that were very burdensome to him, that he might not fright men away from Christianity, and cause them to stand as it were braced and armed against it; but on the contrary, if possible, might with condescension and friendship win and draw them to it; 1 Cor. ix. 19—23. And agreeable hereto are the directions he gives to others, both ministers and people: So he directs the Christian Romans, "not to please themselves, but every one please his neighbour, for his good, to edification," Rom. xv. 1, 2. and to "follow after the things that make for peace," chap. xiv. 19. And he expresses it in terms exceeding strong. Rom. xii. 18. "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men." And he directs ministers to endeavour, if possible, to gain opposers by a meek, condescending treatment, avoiding all appearance of strife or fierceness, 2 Tim. ii. 24—26. To the like purpose, the same apostle directs Christians to "walk in wisdom towards them that are without," Eph. iv. 5, and to avoid giving offence to others, if we can, "that our good may not be evil spoken of," Rom. xiv. 16. So that it is evident, the most zealous and most successful propagator of vital religion that ever was, looked upon it to be of great consequence to endeavour, as much as possible, by all the methods of lawful meekness and gentleness, to avoid raising the prejudice and opposition of the world against religion.—When we have done our utmost, there will be opposition enough to vital religion, against which the carnal mind of man has such an enmity. We should not therefore needlessly increase and raise that enmity. The apostle, though he took so much pains to please men, had persecution almost every where raised up against him. A fisherman is careful not needlessly to ruffle and disturb the water, lest he should drive the fish away from his net; but he will rather endeavour, if possible, to draw them into it. Such a fisherman was the apostle, 2 Cor. xii. 15, 16. "And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved. But be it so, I did not burden you: nevertheless, being crafty, I caught you with guile."

The necessity of suffering persecution, in order to being a true Christian, has undoubtedly by some been carried to an extreme, and the doctrine has been abused. It has been looked upon as necessary to uphold a man's credit amongst others as a Christian, that he should be persecuted. I have heard it made an objection against the sincerity of particular

persons, that they were no more hated and reproached. And the manner of glorying in persecution, or the cross of Christ, has in some been very wrong, bearing too much the appearance of lifting up themselves in it, that they were very much hated and reviled, more than most, as an evidence of their excelling others, in being good soldiers of Jesus Christ. Such an improvement of the doctrine of the enmity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, and of the necessity of persecution, becoming credible and customary, has a direct tendency to cause those that would be accounted true Christians, to behave themselves so towards those that are not well-affected to religion, as to provoke their hatred, or at least to be but little careful to avoid it, and not very studiously and earnestly to strive (after the apostle's example and precepts) to please them to their edification, and by meekness and gentleness to win them, and by all possible means to live peacably with them.

I believe that saying of our Saviour "I came not to send peace on earth, but division," has been abused; as though when we see great strife arise about religion, violent heats of spirit against the truly pious, and a loud clamour and uproar against the work of God, it was to be rejoiced in, because it is that which Christ came to send. It has almost been laid down as a maxim by some, That the more division and strife, the better sign; which naturally leads persons to seek and provoke it, or leads them to such a manner of behaviour, such a roughness and sharpness, or such an affected neglect as has a natural tendency to raise prejudice and opposition; instead of striving as the apostle did to his utmost, by all meekness, gentleness, and benevolence of behaviour, to prevent or assuage it.—Christ came to send a sword on earth, and to cause division, no otherwise than he came to send damnation; for Christ, that is set for the glorious restoration of some, is set for the fall of others, and to be a stone of stumbling and rock of offence to them, and an occasion of their vastly more aggravated and terrible ruin. And this is always the consequence of a great revival of vital religion; it is the means of the salvation of some, and the more aggravated damnation of others. But certainly this is no just argument that men's exposedness to damnation is not to be lamented, or that we should not exert ourselves to our utmost, in all the methods that we can devise, that others might be saved, and to avoid all such behaviour towards them as tends to lead them down to hell.

I know there is naturally a great enmity in the heart of man against vital religion; and I believe there would have been a great deal of opposition against this glorious work of God in New England, if the subjects and promoters

of it had behaved themselves never so agreeably to Christian rules; and I believe if this work goes on and spreads much in the world, so as to begin to shake kingdoms and nations, it will dreadfully stir up the rage of earth and hell, and will put the world into the greatest uproar that ever it was in since it stood. I believe Satan's dying struggles will be the most violent; but yet a great deal might be done to restrain this opposition, by a good conformity to that of the apostle, Jam. iii. 13. "Who is a wise man, and endued with knowledge? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom." And I also believe that if the rules of Christian charity, meekness, gentleness and prudence, had been duly observed by the generality of the zealous promoters of this work, it would have made three times the progress that it has; *i. e.* if it had pleased God in such a case to give a blessing to means in proportion as he has done.

Under this head of carelessness about future consequences, it may be proper to say something of introducing things new and strange, and that have a tendency by their novelty to shock and surprise people. Nothing can be more evident from the New Testament, than that such things ought to be done with great caution, and moderation, to avoid the offence that may be thereby given, and the prejudices that might be raised, to clog and hinder the progress of religion. Yea, it ought to be thus in things that are in themselves good and excellent, and of great weight, provided they are not things of absolute duty, which though they may appear to be innovations, yet cannot be neglected without immorality or disobedience to the commands of God. What great caution and moderation did the apostles use in introducing things that were new, and abolishing things that were old in their day? How gradually were the ceremonial performances of the law of Moses removed and abolished among the Christian Jews? and how long did even the apostle Paul himself conform to those ceremonies which he calls weak and beggarly elements? yea, even to the rite of circumcision, (Acts xvi. 3.) that he might not prejudice the Jews against Christianity? So it seems to have been very gradually that the Jewish sabbath was abolished, and the Christian sabbath introduced, for the same reason. And the apostles avoided teaching Christians in those early days, at least for a great while, some high and excellent divine truths, because they could not bear them yet, 1 Cor. iii. 1, 2. Heb. v. 11. to the end. Thus strictly did the apostles observe the rule that their blessed master gave them, of not putting new wine into old bottles, lest they should burst the bottles and lose the wine. And how did Christ himself, while on earth, forbear so plainly to teach his disciples the great doctrines of Christianity, concerning his satisfaction, and

the nature and manner of a sinner's justification and reconciliation with God, and the particular benefits of his death, resurrection, and ascension? because, in that infant state of the disciples, their minds were not prepared for such instructions; and therefore the more clear and full revelation of these things was reserved for the time when their minds should be further enlightened and strengthened by the out-pouring of the Spirit after his ascension; John xvi. 12, 13. "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth." And Mark iv. 33. "And with many such parables spake he the word unto them, as they were able to bear it." These things might be enough to convince any one, that does not think himself wiser than Christ and his apostles, that great prudence and caution should be used in introducing things into the church of God, that are very uncommon, though in themselves excellent, lest by our rashness and imprudent haste we hinder religion much more than we help it.

Persons influenced by indiscreet zeal are always in too much haste; they are impatient of delays, and therefore are for jumping to the uppermost step first, before they have taken the preceding steps; whereby they expose themselve to fall and break their bones. They are delighted to see the building rise, and all their endeavour and strength is employed in advancing its height, without taking care proportionably of the bottom; whereby the whole is in danger of coming to the ground. Or they are for putting on the cupola and pinnacle before the lower parts of the building are done; which tends at once to put a stop to the building, and hinder its ever being a complete structure. Many that are thus imprudent and hasty with their zeal, have a real eager appetite for that which is good; but like children, are impatient to wait for the fruit, and therefore snatch it before it is ripe. Oftentimes in their haste they overshoot their mark, and frustrate their own end; they put that which they would obtain further out of reach than it was before, and establish and confirm that which they would remove. Things must have time to ripen. The prudent husbandman waits till the harvest is ripe, before he reaps. We are now just beginning to recover out of a dreadful disease; but to feed a man recovering from a fever with strong meat at once, is the ready way to kill him. The reformation from popery was much hindered by this hasty zeal. Many were for immediately rectifying all disorders by force, which was condemned by *Luther*, and was a great trouble to him. (See *Sleiden's* Hist. of the Reformation, p. 52, &c. and book v. throughout.) It is a vain prejudice that some have lately imbibed against such rules of prudence and moderation; but they will be forced to come to them at last; they will find themselves unable to maintain their cause without them; and,

if they will not hearken before, experience will convince them at last, when it will be too late for them to rectify their mistake.

Another error, arising from an erroneous principle, is a wrong notion that they have an attestation of divine providence to persons, or things. We go too far, when we look upon the success that God gives to some persons, in making them the instruments of doing much good, as a testimony of God's approbation of those persons and all the courses they take. It has been a main argument to defend the conduct of some ministers, who have been blamed as imprudent and irregular, that God has blessed them, and given them great success; and that however men charge them as guilty of wrong things, yet that God is with them, and then who can be against them? And probably some of those ministers themselves, by this very means, have had their ears stopt against all that has been said to convince them of their misconduct. But there are innumerable ways by which persons may be misled, in forming a judgment of the mind and will of God, from the events of providence. If a person's success be a reward of something in him that God approves, yet it is no argument that he approves of every thing in him. Who can tell how far the divine grace may go in greatly rewarding some small good in a person, a good meaning, something good in his disposition; while he at the same time, in sovereign mercy, hides his eyes from a great deal that is bad, which it is his pleasure to forgive, and not to mark against the person, though in itself it be very ill? God has not told us after what manner he will proceed in this matter, and we go upon most uncertain grounds when we undertake to determine. It is an exceeding difficult thing to know how far love or hatred are exercised towards persons or actions by all that is before us. God was pleased in his sovereignty to give such success to Jacob in that which, from beginning to end, was a deceitful, lying contrivance and proceeding of his. In that way he obtained a blessing that was worth infinitely more than the fatness of the earth and the dew of heaven, given to Esau in his blessing; yea, worth more than all that the world can afford. God was for a while with Judas, so that by God's power accompanying him, he wrought miracles and cast out devils; but this could not justly be interpreted as God's approbation of his person, or the thievery in which he lived at the same time.

The dispensations and events of Providence, with their reasons, are too little understood by us, to be as our rule, instead of God's word; "God has his way in the sea, and his path in the mighty waters, and his footsteps are not known, and he gives us no account of any of his matters." And therefore we cannot safely take the events of his providence as a revelation of his mind concerning a person's conduct and behaviour: we

have no warrant so to do. God has never appointed those things to be our rule. We have but one rule to go by, and that is his holy word: and when we join any thing else with it, as having the force of a rule, we are guilty of that which is strictly forbidden. Deut. iv. 2. Prov. xxx. 6. and Rev. xxii. 18. They who make what they imagine is pointed forth to them in providence, the rule of behaviour, do err, as well as those that follow impulses and impressions. We should put nothing in the room of the word of God. It is to be feared that some have been greatly confirmed and emboldened, by the great success that God has given them, in some things that have really been contrary to the rules of God's holy word. If so, they have been guilty of presumption, and abusing God's kindness to them, and the great honour he has put upon them. They have seen that God was with them, and made them victorious in their preaching; and this, it is to be feared, has been abused by some to a degree of self-confidence. This has much taken off all jealousy of themselves; they have been bold therefore to go great lengths, in a presumption that God was with them, and would defend them, and finally baffle all that found fault with them.

Indeed there is a voice of God in his providence, that may be interpreted and well understood by the rule of his word; and providence may, to our dark minds and weak faith, confirm the word of God, as it fulfils it. But to *improve* divine providence thus, is quite a different thing from making a *rule* of providence. Good use may be made of the events of providence, of our own observation and experience, and human histories, and the opinion of eminent men; but finally all must be brought to *one rule*, viz. the word of God, and that must be regarded as our *only rule*.

Nor do I think that they go upon sure ground, who conclude they have not been in an error in their conduct, because at the time of their doing a thing for which they have been blamed and reproached by others, they were favoured with special comforts of God's Spirit. God's bestowing special spiritual mercies on a person, is no sign that he approves of every thing he sees in him at that time. David had the presence of God while he lived in polygamy; and Solomon had some very high favours, and peculiar smiles of heaven, and particularly at the dedication of the temple, while he greatly multiplied wives to himself, and horses, and silver, and gold; all contrary to the most express command of God to the king, in the law of Moses, Deut. xvii. 16, 17. We cannot tell how far God may hide his eyes from beholding iniquity in Jacob, and seeing perverseness in Israel. We cannot tell what are the reasons of God's actions any further than he interprets for himself. God sometimes gave some of the primi-

tive Christians the extraordinary influence of his Spirit when they were out of the way of their duty, and even while they were abusing it; as is plainly implied, 1 Cor. xiv. 31, 33. Suppose a person has done a thing for which he is reproached, and that reproach be an occasion of his feeling sweet exercises of grace in his soul; I do not think that a certain evidence that God approves of the thing he is blamed for: for undoubtedly a mistake may be the occasion of stirring up the exercise of grace, if a person, through mistake, thinks he has received some particular great mercy, that mistake may be the occasion of stirring up the sweet exercises of love, and true thankfulness to God. Suppose one that is full of love to God should hear what he deems credible tidings, concerning a remarkable deliverance of a child or a dear friend, or of some glorious thing done for the city of God, no wonder if, on such an occasion, the sweet actings of love to God, and delight in God, should be excited, though indeed afterwards it should prove a false report that he had heard. So, if one that loves God is much maligned and reproached for doing what he thiuks God required and approves, no wonder that it is sweet to such an one to think that God is his friend, though men are his enemies; no wonder at all, that this is an occasion of his betaking himself to God as his sure friend, and find sweet complacence in him; though he be indeed in a mistake concerning that which he thought was agreeable to God's will. As I have before shewn that the exercise of a truly good affection may be the occasion of error, and may indirectly incline a person to do that which is wrong; so, on the other hand, error, or a doing that which is wrong, may be an occasion of the exercise of a truly good affection. The reason of it is this, that however all exercises of grace be from the Spirit of God, yet he dwells and acts in the hearts of the saints, in some measure after the manner of a vital, natural principle, a principle of new nature in them; whose exercises are excited by means, in some measure, as other natural principles are. Though grace is not in the saints as a mere natural principle, but as a sovereign agent, and so its exercises are not tied to means, by an immutable law of nature, as in mere natural principles; yet God has so constituted, that grace should dwell so in the hearts of the saints, that its exercises should have some degree of connection with means, after the manner of a principle of nature.

Another erroneous principle that has been an occasion of some mischief and confusion, is, That external order in matters of religion, and use of the means of grace, is but little to be regarded. It has been spoken lightly of, under the names of ceremonies and dead forms, &c. and is probably the more despised by some, because their opposers insist so much

upon it, and because they are so continually hearing from them the cry of *disorder and confusion.*——It is objected against the importance of external order, That God does not look at the outward form; he looks at the heart. But that is a weak argument against its importance, that true godliness does not consist in it; for it may be equally made use of against all the outward means of grace whatsoever. True godliness does not consist in ink and paper, but yet that would be a foolish objection against the importance of ink and paper in religion, when without it we could not have the word of God. If any external means at all are needful, any outward actions of a public nature, or wherein God's people are jointly concerned in public society, without doubt external order is needful. The management of an external affair that is public, or wherein a multitude is concerned, without order, is in every thing found impossible.—Without order there can be no general direction of a multitude to any particular designed end, their purposes will cross and hinder one another. A multitude cannot act in union one with another without order; confusion separates and divides them, so that there can be no concert or agreement. If a multitude would help one another in any affair, they must unite themselves one to another in a regular subordination of members, in some measure, as it is in the natural body; by this means they will be in some capacity to act with united strength. And thus Christ has appointed that it should be in the visible church, as 1 Cor. xii. 14, &c. and Rom. xii. 4—8. Zeal without order will do but little, or at least it will be effectual but a little while. Let a company, however zealous against the enemy, go forth to war without any order, every one rushing forward as his zeal shall drive him, all in confusion; if they gain something at the first onset, by surprising the enemy, yet how soon do they come to nothing, and fall an easy helpless prey to their adversaries? Order is one of the most necessary of all external means of the spiritual good of God's church; and therefore it is requisite even in heaven itself, where there is the least need of any external means of grace. Order is maintained amongst the glorious angels there. And the necessity of it for carrying on any design, wherein a multitude are concerned, is so great that even the devils in hell are driven to something of it, that they may carry on the designs of their kingdom. And it is very observable, that those irrational creatures for whom it is needful that they should act in union, and join as a multitude together to carry on any work for their preservation—by a wonderful instinct that God has put into them—observe and maintain a most regular and exact order among themselves; such as bees and some others. And order in the visible church is not only

necessary for carrying on the designs of Christ's glory and the church's prosperity, but it is absolutely necessary to its defence; without it, it is like a city without walls, and can be in no capacity to defend itself from any kind of mischief. And so, however it be an external thing, yet is not to be despised on that account; for though it be not the food of souls, yet it is in some respect their defence. The people of Holland would be very foolish to despise the dikes that keep out the sea from overwhelming them, under the names of dead stones and vile earth, because the matter of which they are built is not good to eat. It seems to be partly on this foundation that some have seemed to act on that principle, That the power of judging and openly censuring others should not be reserved in the hands of particular persons, or consistories appointed thereto, but ought to be left at large, for any body that pleases to take it upon them, or that think themselves fit for it. But more of this afterwards.

On this foundation also, an orderly attending on the stated worship of God in families, has been made too light of; and it has been in some places too much a common and customary thing to be absent from family-worship, and to be abroad late in the night at religious meetings, or to attend religious conversation. Not but that this may be done on certain extraordinary occasions; I have seen the case to be such in many instances, that I have thought did afford sufficient warrant for persons to be absent from family-prayer, and to be from home till very late in the night. But we should take heed that it do not become a custom or common practice; if so, we shall soon find the consequences to be very ill. It seems to be on the same foundation—the supposed unprofitableness of external order—that it has been thought by some, there is no need of religious services and performances being limited to any certain office in the church; (of which more afterwards.) And also, that those offices themselves, particularly that of the gospel-ministry, need not be limited, as it used to be, to persons of a liberal education; but some of late have been for having others, whom they have supposed to be persons of eminent experience, publicly licensed to preach, yea and ordained to the work of the ministry; and some ministers have seemed to favour such a thing. But how little do they seem to look forward, and consider the unavoidable consequences of opening such a door! If once it should become a custom, or a thing generally approved and allowed of, to admit uneducated persons to the work of the ministry, because of their remarkable experiences, and good understanding, how many laypersons would soon appear as candidates for the work of the ministry? I doubt not but that I have been acquainted with scores that would have desired it. And how shall we know

where to stop? If one is admitted because his experiences are remarkable, another will think his experiences also remarkable; and we perhaps shall not be able to deny but that they are nearly as great. If one is admitted because, besides experiences, he has good natural abilities, another by himself, and many of his neighbours, may be thought equal to him. It will be found of absolute necessity that there should be some certain, visible limits fixed, to avoid bringing odium upon ourselves, and breeding uneasiness and strife amongst others; and I know of none better, and indeed no other that can well be fixed, than what the prophet Zechariah fixes, viz. That those only should be appointed to be pastors or shepherds in God's church, that "have been taught to keep cattle from their youth," or that have had an education for that purpose. Those ministers who would break over these limits, and make a practice of it, would break down that fence which they themselves, after they have been wearied with the ill consequences, would be glad to have somebody else build up for them. Not but that there may probably be some persons in the land, who have had no education at college, that are in themselves better qualified for the work of the ministry, than some others who have taken their degrees, and are now ordained. But yet I believe the breaking over those bounds which have hitherto been set, in ordaining such persons, would in its consequences be a greater calamity than the missing such persons in the work of the ministry. Opening a door for the admission of unlearned men to the work of the ministry, though they should be persons of extraordinary experience, would on some accounts be especially prejudicial at such a day as this; because such persons, for want of extensive knowledge, are oftentimes forward to lead others into those things which a people are in danger of at such a time, above all others; viz. impulses, vain imaginations, superstition, indiscreet zeal, and such like extremes.

Another erroneous principle that some have been at least in danger of, is, that ministers, because they speak as Christ's ambassadors, may assume the same style, and speak as with the same authority that the prophets of old did, yea, that Jesus Christ himself did in the 23d of Matthew, "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, &c.;" and that not only when they are speaking to the people, but also to their brethren in the ministry. The principle is absurd, because it makes no difference in the degrees and orders of messengers, though God has made a very great difference; for though they all come in some respect in the name of God, and with something of his authority, yet certainly there is a vast difference in the *degree* of authority with which God has invested them. Jesus Christ was sent into the world as God's

messenger, and so was one of his apostles; and so also is an ordinary pastor of a church: but yet it does not follow, that because Jesus Christ and an ordinary minister are both messengers of God, that therefore an ordinary minister, in his office, is vested with an equal degree of authority that Christ was in his. As there is a great difference in their authority, and as Christ came as God's messenger in a vastly higher manner, so another style became him, more authoritative than is proper for us worms of the dust, though we also are messengers of inferior degree. It would be strange if God, when he has made so great a difference in the degree in which he has invested different messengers with his authority, should make no difference as to the outward appearance and shew of authority. Though God has put great honour upon ministers, and they may speak as his ambassadors, yet he never intended that they should have the same outward appearance of authority and majesty, either in their behaviour or speech, as his Son shall have, when he comes to judgment at the last day: though both come in the name of the Lord. Alas! can it enter into the hearts of worms of the dust, that it is fit and suitable it should be so?

SECT. III.

A third cause of errors in conduct, is, being ignorant or unobservant of some things, by which the devil has special advantage.

And here I would particularly notice some things with respect to the *inward experiences* of Christians themselves. And something with regard to the *external effects* of experiences.

I. *Inward experiences.*—There are three things I would notice with regard to the experiences of Christians, by which the devil has many advantages against us.

1. The first thing is the mixture there oftentimes is in the experiences of true Christians; whereby when they have truly gracious experiences, and divine and spiritual discoveries and exercises, they have something else mixed with them, besides what is spiritual. There is a mixture of that which is natural, and that which is corrupt, with that which is divine. The great imperfection of grace, the feebleness and infancy of the new nature, and the great remains of corruption, together with our circumstances in this world, where we are encompassed with what tends to pollute us, expose to this. And indeed it is not to be supposed that Christians ever have any

experiences in this world that are wholly pure, entirely spiritual, without any mixture of what is natural and carnal. The beam of light, as it comes from the fountain of light upon our hearts, is pure; but, as it is reflected thence, it is mixed. The seed, as sent from heaven, and planted in the heart, is pure; but, as it springs up out of the heart, is impure: yea, there is commonly a much greater mixture than persons for the most part seem to imagine. I have often thought that the experiences of true Christians are very frequently as it is with some sorts of fruits, which are enveloped in several coverings of thick shells or pods, that are thrown away by him that gathers the fruit, and but a very small part of the whole bulk is the pure kernel that is good to eat.

The things, of all which there is frequently some mixture with gracious experiences, yea, with very great and high experiences, are these three; *human or natural affection and passions; impressions on the imagination;* and a degree of *self-righteousness* or *spiritual pride.* There is very often with that which is spiritual a great mixture of that affection or passion which arises from natural principles; so that nature has a very great hand in those vehement motions and flights of the passions that appear. Hence the same degrees of divine communications from heaven shall have vastly different effects, in what outwardly appears, in persons of different natural tempers. The great mixture of that which is natural with that which is spiritual, is very manifest in the peculiar effects that divine influences have in some certain families, or persons of such a blood, in distinguishing the operations of the passions and affections, and the manner of their outward expressions. I know some remarkable instances of this. The same is also evident by the different effects of divine communications on the same person at different times, and in different circumstances. The novelty of things, or the sudden transition from an opposite extreme, and many other things that might be mentioned, greatly contribute to the raising of the passions. And sometimes there is not only a mixture of that which is common and natural with gracious experience, but even that which is animal, what is in a great measure from the body, and is properly the result of the animal frame. In what true Christians feel of affections towards God, all is not always purely holy and divine; every thing that is felt in the affections does not arise from spiritual principles, but common and natural principles have a very great hand; an improper self-love may have a great share in the effect: God is not loved for his own sake, or for the excellency and beauty of his own perfections, as he ought to be; nor have these things in any wise that proportion in the effect that they ought to have. So, in the love true Christians have to one another, very often

there is a great mixture of what arises from common and natural principles, with grace. Self-love has a great hand; the children of God are not loved purely for Christ's sake, but there may be a great mixture of that natural love which many sects of heretics have boasted of, who have been greatly united one to another, because they were of their company, on their side, against the rest of the world; yea, there may be a mixture of natural love to the opposite sex, with Christian and divine love. So there may be a great mixture in that sorrow for sin which the godly have, and also in their joys; natural principles may greatly contribute to what is felt, a great many ways, as might easily be shewn. There is nothing that belongs to Christian experience more liable to a corrupt mixture than zeal. Though it be an excellent virtue, a heavenly flame, when it is pure; yet as it is exercised in those who are so little sanctified, and so little humbled, as we are in the present state, it is very apt to be mixed with human passion, yea, with corrupt, hateful affections, pride and uncharitable bitterness, and other things that are not from heaven, but from hell.

Another thing often mixed with what is spiritual in the experiences of Christians, is an impression on the imagination; whereby godly persons, together with a spiritual understanding of divine things, and conviction of their reality and certainty, and a deep sense of their excellency or great importance upon their hearts, have strongly impressed on their minds external ideas or images of things. A degree of imagination in such a case, is unavoidable, and necessarily arises from human nature, as constituted in the present state; and often is of great benefit; but, when it is in too great a degree, it becomes an impure mixture that is prejudicial. This mixture very often arises from the constitution of the body. It commonly greatly contributes to the other kind of mixture mentioned before, viz. of natural affections and passions; it helps to raise them to a great height.

Another thing that is often mixed with the experiences of true Christians, which is the worst mixture of all, is a degree of self-righteousness or spiritual pride. This is often mixed with the joys of Christians. Their joy is not purely the joy of faith, or a rejoicing in Christ Jesus, but is partly a rejoicing in themselves. There is oftentimes in their elevations a looking upon themselves, and a viewing their own high attainments; they rejoice partly because they are taken with their own experiences and great discoveries, which makes them in their own apprehensions so to excel; and this heightens all their passions, and especially those effects that are more external. There is a much greater mixture of these things in the experiences of some Christians than

others; in some the mixture is so great, as very much to obscure and hide the beauty of grace in them, like a thick smoke that hinders all the shining of the fire.

These things we ought to be well aware of, that we may not take all for gold that glitters, and that we may know what to countenance and encourage, and what to discourage; otherwise Satan will have a vast advantage against us, for he works in the corrupt mixture. Sometimes, for want of persons distinguishing the ore from the pure metal, those experiences are most admired by the persons themselves and by others, that are not the most excellent. The great external effects, and vehemence of the passions, and violent agitations of the animal spirits, is sometimes much owing to the corrupt mixture, (as is very apparent in some instances,) though it be not always so. I have observed a great difference among those of high affections, and seem disposed to be earnestly talking to those about them. Some insist much more, in their talk, on what they behold in God and Christ, the glory of the divine perfections, Christ's beauty and excellency, and wonderful condescension and grace, and their own unworthiness, and the great and infinite obligations that they themselves and others are under to love and serve God: others insist almost wholly on their own high privileges, their assurance of God's love and favour, and the weakness and wickedness of opposers, and how much they are above their reach. The latter may have much of the presence of God, but their experiences do not appear to be so solid and unmixed as the former. And there is a great deal of difference in persons' earnestness in their talk and behaviour. In some it seems to come from the fulness of their hearts, and from the great sense they have of truth. They have a deep sense of the certainty and infinite greatness, excellency and importance of divine and eternal things, attended with all appearances of great humility. In others their earnestness seems to arise from a great mixture of human passion, and an undue and intemperate agitation of the spirits, which appears by their earnestness and vehemence not being proportioned to the nature of the subject they insist on, but they are violent in every thing they say, as much when they are talking of things of smaller importance, as when speaking of things of greater weight. I have seen it thus in an instance or two, in which this vehemence at length issued in distraction. And there have been some few instances of a more extraordinary nature still, even of persons finding themselves disposed earnestly to talk and cry out, from an unaccountable kind of bodily pressure, without any extraordinary view of any thing in their minds, or sense of any thing upon their hearts; wherein probably there was the immediate hand of the devil.

2. Another thing, by which the devil has great advantage.

is the unheeded *defects* there sometimes are in the experiences of true Christians, connected with those high affections wherein there is much that is truly good. I do not mean that defect or imperfection of degree which is in every holy disposition and exercise in this life, in the best of the saints; but I aim at experiences being especially defective in some particular thing that ought to be in them; which, though it be not an essential defect, or such as in the experiences of hypocrites, which renders them utterly vain, monstrous, and altogether abominable to God, is such as maims and deforms the experience. The essence of truly Christian experiences is not wanting, but that is wanting which is very needful in order to the proper beauty of the image of Christ in such a person's experiences. Things are very much out of a due proportion; there is indeed much of some things, but at the same time there is so little of some other things that should bear a proportion, that the defect very much deforms the Christian, and is truly odious in the sight of God. What I observed before was something *too much*, something mixed, not belonging to the Christian as such; what I speak of now is something *not enough*, something wanting that does belong to the Christian as such. The one deforms the Christian as a monstrous excrescence; by the other the new creature is maimed, some member in a great measure is wanting, or so small and withering as to be very much out of due proportion. This is another spiritual calamity that the saints are liable to through the great imperfection of grace in this life. Thus the chicken in the egg, in the beginning of its formation, has indeed the rudiments or lineaments of all the parts; yet some few parts are plainly seen, when others are hid, so that without a microscope it appears very monstrous. When this deficiency and disproportion is great, as sometimes it is in real saints, it is not only a great deformity in itself, but has many ill consequences; it gives the devil great advantage, leaves a door open for corruption, exposes to very deformed and unlovely actions, and issues oftentimes in the great wounding of the soul.

For the better understanding of this matter, we may observe, that God, in the revelation that he has made of himself to the world by Jesus Christ, has taken care to give a proportionable manifestation of two kinds of excellencies or perfections of his nature, viz. those that especially tend to possess us with awe and reverence, and to search and humble us; and those that tend to win, to draw and encourage us. By the one, he appears as an infinitely great, pure, holy and heart-searching judge; by the other, as a gentle and gracious father and a loving friend. By the one, he is a pure, searching and burning flame; by the other, a sweet, refreshing light. These two kind of attributes are as it were admirably

tempered together in the revelation of the gospel. There is a proportionable manifestation of justice and mercy, holiness and grace, majesty and gentleness, authority and condescension. God hath thus ordered that his diverse excellencies, as he reveals himself in the face of Jesus Christ, should have a proportionable manifestation, herein providing for our necessities. He knew it to be of great consequence that our apprehensions of these diverse perfections of his nature should be duly proportioned one to another. A defect on the one hand, viz. having a discovery of his love and grace, without a proportionable discovery of his awful majesty, his holy and searching purity, would tend to spiritual pride, carnal confidence and presumption; and a defect on the other hand, viz. having a discovery of his holy majesty, without a proportionable discovery of his grace, tends to unbelief, a sinful fearfulness and spirit of bondage. And therefore herein chiefly consists that deficiency of experiences that I am now speaking of. The revelation God has made of himself in his word, and the provision made for our spiritual welfare in the gospel, are perfect; but the actual light and communications we have, are many ways exceeding imperfect and maimed. And experience plainly shews, that Christians may have high manifestations in some respects, and yet their circumstances may be unhappy in this regard, that their discoveries are no more general. There is a great difference among Christians in this respect; some have much more general discoveries than others, who are upon many accounts the most amiable Christians. Christians may have experiences that are very high, and yet there may be very much of this deficiency and disproportion. Their high experiences are truly from the Spirit of God, but sin comes in by the defect, (as indeed all sin is originally from a defective privative cause,) and in such a case high discoveries, at the same time they that are enjoyed, may be and sometimes are the occasion, or *causa sine qua non*, of sin. Sin may come in at that back door, the gap that is left open; as spiritual pride often does. And many times the Spirit of God is quenched by this means, and God punishes the pride and presumption that rises, by bringing such darkness and suffering, such awful consequences and horrid temptations, as are enough to make one's hair stand on end to hear them. Christians therefore should diligently observe their own hearts as to this matter, and should pray to God that he would give them experiences in which one thing may bear a proportion to another, that God may be honoured and their souls edified thereby; and ministers should have an eye to this, in their private dealings with the souls of their people.

It is chiefly from such a defect of experiences that some things have arisen which have been pretty common among true

Christians of late, though supposed by many to have arisen from a good cause; as particularly talking of divine and heavenly things, and expressing divine joys with laughter or a light behaviour. I believe in many instances such things have arisen from a good cause, as their *causa sine qua non*. High discoveries and gracious joyful affections have been the occasion of them; but the proper cause has been sin, even that odious defect in their experience, whereby there has been wanting a sense of the awful and holy majesty of God as present with them, and their nothingness and vileness before him, proportionable to the sense they have had of God's grace and the love of Christ. And the same is true in many cases of unsuitable boldness; a disposition to speak with authority, intemperate zeal, and many other things that sometimes appear under great religious affections. And sometimes the vehemence of the motion of the animal spirits, under great affections, is owing in considerable measure to experiences being thus partial. I have known it in several instances, that persons have been greatly affected with the dying love of Christ, and the consideration of the happiness of the enjoyment of him in heaven, and other things of that nature, and their animal spirits at the same time have been in a great emotion; but in the midst of it they have had such a deep sense of the awful, holy majesty of God, as at once composed them, and quieted animal nature, without diminishing their comfort, but only has made it of a better and more solid nature. When they have had a sense both of the majesty and grace of God, one thing has as it were balanced another, and caused a more happy sedateness and composure of body and mind.

From these things we may learn how to judge of experiences, and to estimate their goodness. Those are not always the best which are attended with the most violent affections, and most vehement motions of the animal spirits, or have the greatest effects on the body. Nor are they always the best, that most dispose persons to abound in talk to others, and to speak in the most vehement manner, though these things often arise from the greatness of spiritual experiences. But those are the most excellent experiences that are qualified as follows: 1. That have the *least mixture*, or are the most purely spiritual. 2. That are the *least deficient* and partial, in which the diverse things that appertain to Christian experience are proportionable one to another. And, 3. That are raised to the highest degree. It is no matter how they are raised if they are qualified as before mentioned, the higher the better. Experiences, thus qualified, will be attended with the most amiable behaviour, will bring forth the most solid and sweet fruits, will be the most durable, and will have the greatest effect on the abiding temper of the soul.

If God is pleased to carry on this work, and it should prove to be the dawning of a general revival of the Christian church, it may be expected that the time will come before long, when the experiences of Christians shall be much more generally thus qualified. We must expect green fruits before we have ripe ones. It is probable that hereafter the discoveries which the saints shall have of divine things, will be in a much higher degree than yet have been; but yet shall be so ordered of an infinitely wise and all-sufficient God, that they shall not have so great an effect, in proportion, on the body, and will be less oppressive to nature. The outward manifestations will rather be like those that were in Stephen, when he was full of the Holy Ghost, when "all that sat in the council, looking steadfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel." Their inward fulness of the Spirit of God in his divine, amiable and sweet influences, shall as it were shine forth in an heavenly aspect, and the manner of speech and behaviour.—But,

3. There is another thing concerning the experiences of Christians, of which it is of yet greater importance that we should be aware, than of the preceding, and that is the *degenerating of experiences.* What I mean is something diverse from the mere decay of experiences, or their gradually vanishing, by persons losing their sense of things, viz. experiences growing by degrees worse and worse in their kind, more and more partial and deficient; in which things are more out of due proportion, and also have more and more of a corrupt mixture; the spiritual part decreases, and the other useless and hurtful parts greatly increase. This I have seen in very many instances; and great are the mischiefs that have risen through want of being more aware of it.

There is commonly, as I observed before, in high experiences, besides that which is spiritual, a mixture of three things, viz. natural or common affections, workings of the imagination, and a degree of self-righteousness or spiritual pride. Now it often comes to pass, that through persons not distinguishing the wheat from the chaff, and for want of watchfulness and humble jealousy of themselves—and by laying great weight on the natural and imaginary part, yielding to it and indulging it, whereby that part grows and increases, and the spiritual part decreases—the devil sets in, and works in the corrupt part, and cherishes it to his utmost. At length the experiences of some persons, who began well, come to little else but violent motions of carnal affections, with great heats of the imagination, a great degree of enthusiasm, and swelling of spiritual pride, very much like some fruits which bud, blossom and kernel well, but afterwards are blasted with an excess of moisture: so that though the bulk is monstrously

great, yet there is little else in it but what is useless and unwholesome. It appears to me very probable, that many of the heresies that have arisen, and sects that have appeared in the Christian world, in one age and another, with wild enthusiastic notions and practices, began at first by this means, that it was such a degenerating of experiences which first gave rise to them, or at least led the way to them.—Nothing in the world so much exposes to this, as an unheeded spiritual pride and self-confidence, and persons being conceited of their own stock, without an humble, daily, and continual dependence on God. And this very thing seems to be typified of old, by the corrupting of the *manna*. Some of the children of Israel, because they had gathered a store of *manna*, trusted in it; there being, as they apprehended, sufficient in the store they had gathered and laid up, without humbly looking to heaven, and stooping to the earth for daily supplies; and the consequence was, that their *manna* bred worms and stank, Exod. xvi. 20. Pride above all things promotes this degeneracy of experiences, because it grieves and quenches the spirit of the Lamb of God; and so it kills the spiritual part, cherishes the natural part, inflames the carnal affections, and heats the imagination.—The unhappy subject of such a degeneracy, for the most part, is not sensible of his own calamity; but because he finds himself still violently moved, has greater heats of zeal, and more vehement motions of his animal spirits, thinks himself fuller of the Spirit of God than ever. But indeed it is with him, as the apostle says of the Galatians, Gal. iii. 3. "Having begun in the spirit, they are made perfect by the flesh."

By the mixture there is of common affection with love to God, the love of true Christians is liable to degenerate, and to be more and more built on a supposition of being his high and peculiar favourites, and less and less on an apprehension of the excellency of God's nature as he is in himself. So the joy of Christians, by reason of the mixture there is with spiritual joy, is liable to degenerate, and to become little else but joy in self, joy in a person's own supposed eminency, and distinction from others in the favour of God. So zeal, that at first might be in great part spiritual, yet, in a long continuance of opposition and controversy, may degenerate more and more into human and proud passion, and may come to bitterness, and even a degree of hatred. And so love to the brethren may by degrees come to little else but fondness, and zeal for a party; yea, through a mixture of a natural love to the opposite sex, may degenerate more and more, till it issues in that which is criminal and gross. And I leave it with those who are better acquainted with ecclesiastical history, to inquire whether such a degeneracy of

affections as this, might not be the first thing that led the way, and gave occasion to the rise of the abominable notions of some sects that have arisen, concerning the community of women. However that is, yet certainly the mutual embraces and kisses of persons of different sexes, under the notion of Christian love and holy kisses, are utterly to be disallowed and abominated, as having the most direct tendency quickly to turn Christian love into unclean and brutish lust, which will not be the better, but ten times the worse, for being christened by the name of *Christian love*. I should also think it advisable, that meetings of young people of both sexes, in the evening, by themselves, without a minister, or any elder people amongst them, for religious exercises, should be avoided. For though for the present, while their minds are greatly solemn with lively impressions, and a deep sense of divine things, there may appear no ill consequence; yet we must look to the further end of things, and guard against future dangers, and advantages that Satan might gain against us. As a lively, solemn sense of divine things on the minds of young persons may gradually decay, so there will be danger that an ill improvement of these meetings may gradually prevail; if not in any unsuitable behaviour while together in the meeting, yet, when they break up to go home, they may naturally consort together in couples, for other than religious purposes; and it may at last so terminate, that young persons may go to such meetings, chiefly for the sake of such an opportunity for company-keeping.

The defect there sometimes is in the experiences of Christians exposes them to degenerate, as well as the mixture that they have. Deficient maimed experiences do sometimes become more and more so. The mind being wholly intent upon those things that are in view, and those that are most wanting being neglected, there is less and less of them, and so the gap for corruption to come in grows wider and wider. And commonly both these causes operate together.—We had need to be "jealous over ourselves with a godly jealousy," as the apostle was over the Christian Corinthians, "lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so our minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." God indeed will never suffer his true saints totally and finally to fall away, but yet may punish their pride and self-confidence, by suffering them to be long led into a dreadful wilderness, by the subtile serpent, to the great wounding of their own souls, and the interest of religion.

Before I dismiss this head of the degenerating of experiences, I would mention one thing more that tends to it; and that is, persons aiming in their experience to go beyond the rule of God's word, *i. e.* aiming at that which

is indeed, in some respect, beyond the rule. Thus some persons have endeavoured utterly to root out and abolish all natural affection, or any special affection or respect to their near relations, under a notion that no other love ought to be allowed but spiritual love, and that all other love is to be abolished as carnal, and that it becomes Christians to have none upon the account of any thing else but the image of God; and that therefore love should go out to one and another only in that proportion in which the image of God is seen in them. They might as well argue that a man ought utterly to disallow of, and endeavour to abolish all love or appetite to his daily food, under a notion that it is a carnal appetite, and that no other appetite should be tolerated but spiritual appetites. Why should the saints strive after that, as a high attainment in holiness, which the apostle in Rom. i. 31. mentions as one instance wherein the heathen had got to the most horrid pass in wickedness, viz. "being without natural affection?" Some have doubted whether they might pray for the conversion and salvation of the souls of their children, any more than for the souls of others; because the salvation of the souls of others would be as much to God's glory, as the salvation of their children; and they have supposed that to pray most for their own, would shew a selfish disposition. So they have been afraid to tolerate a compassionate grief and concern for their nearest friends, for fear it would be an argument of want of resignation to God.—It is true, there is great danger of persons setting their hearts too much upon their earthly friends; our love to earthly friends ought to be under the government of the love of God, and should be attended with a spirit of submission and resignation to his will, and every thing should be subordinated to his glory. But that is no argument that these affections should be entirely abolished. The Creator of the world has put them in us, for the good of mankind, and because he saw they would be needful for them, as they must be united in society in the present state, and are of great use when kept in their proper place; and to endeavour totally to root them out, would be to reproach and oppose the wisdom of the Creator. Nor is the being of these natural inclinations, if well regulated, inconsistent with any part of our duty to God, or any argument of a sinful selfishness, any more than our natural abhorrence of pain, and the natural inclination to ease that was in the man Christ Jesus himself.

It is the duty of parents to be more concerned and to pray more for the salvation of their children, than for the children of their neighbours; as it is the duty of a minister to be more concerned for the salvation of the souls of his flock, and to pray more for them, than those of other congregations. because they

are committed to his care. So our near friends are more committed to our care than others, and our near neighbours, than those that live at a great distance; and the people of our land and nation are more, in some sense, committed to our care than the people of China, and we ought to pray more for them, and to be more concerned that the kingdom of Christ should flourish among them, than in another country, where it would be as much, and no more, for the glory of God. Compassion ought especially to be exercised towards friends, Job. vi. 14. Christ did not frown upon a special affection and compassion for near friends; but rather countenanced and encouraged it, from time to time, in those who, in the exercise of such an affection and compassion, applied to him for relief for their friends; as in the instances of the woman of Canaan, Jairus, Mary and Martha, the centurion, the widow of Nain, and many others. The apostle Paul, though as much resigned and devoted to God, and under the power of his love, perhaps as any mere man that ever lived, had a peculiar concern for his countrymen the Jews, the rather on that account, that they were his "brethren and kinsmen according to the flesh." He had a very high degree of compassionate grief for them, insomuch that he tells us he had great heaviness and continual sorrow of heart for them, and could wish himself accursed from Christ for them. Many things are proper for the saints in heaven, which are not suitable to our state in this world: and for Christians, in these and other instances, to affect to go beyond the present state of mankind, and what God has appointed as fit for it, is an instance of that which the wise man calls *being righteous over much*, and has a tendency to open a door for Satan, and to cause religious affections to degenerate into something very unbecoming Christians.—Thus I have, as I proposed, taken notice of some things with regard to the inward experiences of Christians, by which Satan has an advantage. I now proceed,

II. To take notice of something with regard to the *external effects* of experiences, which also gives Satan an advantage. What I refer to, is the secret and unaccountable influence that custom has upon persons, with respect to the external effects and manifestations of the inward affections of the mind. By custom I mean, both a person's being accustomed to a thing in himself, in his own common, allowed and indulged practice; and also the countenance and approbation of others amongst whom he dwells, by their general voice and practice. It is well known, and appears sufficiently by what I have said already in this treatise and elsewhere, that I am far from ascribing all the late uncommon effects and outward manifestations of inward experiences to custom and fashion, as some do:

I know it to be otherwise, if it be possible for me to know any thing of this nature by the most critical observation, under all manner of opportunities of observing. But yet this also is exceeding evident by experience, that custom has a strange influence in these things. I know it by the different manners and degrees of external effects and manifestations of great affections and high discoveries, in different towns, according to what persons are gradually led into, and to which they are insensibly habituated, by example and custom; and also in the same place, at different times, according to their conduct. If some person conducts them, that much countenances and encourages such kind of outward manifestations of great affections, they naturally and insensibly prevail, and grow by degrees unavoidable; but, when afterwards they come under another kind of conduct, the manner of external appearances will strangely alter. And yet it seems to be without any proper design or contrivance of those in whom there is this alteration; it is not properly affected by them, but the influence of example and custom is secret and insensible to the persons themselves. These things have a vast influence in the manner of persons manifesting their joys, whether with smiles and an air of lightness, or whether with more solemnity and reverence; and so they have a great influence as to the disposition persons have under high affections to abound in talk; and also as to the manner of their speaking, the loudness and vehemence of their speech. It would however be exceeding unjust, and against all the evidence of fact and experience, and the reason of things, to ascribe to custom all dispositions to be much in speaking to others, and to speak in a very earnest manner. It is manifest that example and custom has some way or other, a secret and unsearchable influence on those actions that are involuntary, in different places, and in the same places at different times.

It would be very unreasonable, and prejudicial to the interest of religion, to frown upon all these extraordinary external effects and manifestations of great religious affections.—A measure of them is natural, necessary, and beautiful, and the effect in no wise disproportioned to the spiritual cause, and is of great benefit to promote religion. Yet I think they greatly err, who suppose that these things should be wholly unlimited, and that all should be encouraged in going to the utmost length that they feel themselves inclined to. There ought to be a gentle restraint upon these things, and there should be a prudent care taken of persons in such extraordinary circumstances. They should be moderately advised at proper seasons, not to make more ado than there is need of, but rather to hold a restraint upon their inclinations; otherwise extraordinary outward effects will grow upon

them, they will be more and more natural and unavoidable, and the extraordinary outward show will increase, without any increase of the internal cause. Persons will find themselves under a kind of necessity of making a great ado, with less and less affection of soul, till at length almost any slight emotion will set them going; and they will be more and more violent and boisterous, and will grow louder and louder, till their actions and behaviour become indeed very absurd. These things experience proves. Thus I have taken notice of the more general causes whence the errors that have attended this great revival of religion have arisen, and under each head have observed some particular errors that have flowed from these fountains.

SECT. IV.

Some particular errors that have arisen from several of the preceding causes—Censuring others.

In some cases perhaps they have been chiefly owing to one, and in others to another, and in others to the influence of several, or all conjunctly. And here the first thing I would take notice of is, censuring professing Christians of good standing in the visible church, as unconverted. I need not repeat what I have elsewhere said to shew this to be against the plain, frequent, and strict prohibitions of the word of God. It is the worst disease that has attended this work, most contrary to the spirit and rules of Christianity, and of the worst consequences.—There is a most unhappy tincture that the minds of many, both ministers and people, have received that way. The manner of many has been, when they first enter into conversation with any person that seems to make any pretences to religion, to fix a judgment of him, from his manner of talking of religious things, whether he be converted, or experimentally acquainted with vital piety or not; and then to treat him accordingly, and freely to express their thoughts of him to others, especially those of whom they have a good opinion, as true Christians, and accepted as brethren and companions in Christ. Or if they do not declare their minds expressly, yet by their manner of speaking of them, at least to their friends, they will shew plainly what their thoughts are. So, when they have heard any minister pray or preach, their first work has been to observe him on a design of discerning him, whether he be a converted man or no; whether he prays like one that feels the saving power of God's Spirit in his heart, and whether he preaches like one that knows what he says. It has been so much the way in

some places, that many new converts do not know but it is their duty to do so, they know no other way. And when once persons yield to such a notion, and give in to such a humour, they will quickly grow very discerning in their own apprehension, and think they can easily tell a hypocrite. And when once they have passed their censure, every thing seems to confirm it; they see more and more in the person they have censured, that seems to them to shew plainly that he is an unconverted man. And then if the person censured be a minister, every thing in his public performances seems dead and sapless, and to do them no good at all, but on the contrary, to be of a deadening influence, and poisonous to the soul; yea, it seems worse and worse to them, his preaching grows more and more intolerable. Which is owing to a secret, strong prejudice, that steals in more and more upon the mind, as experience plainly and certainly shews. When the Spirit of God was wonderfully poured out in this place more than seven years ago, and near thirty souls in a week, take one with another, for five or six weeks together, were to appearance brought home to Christ, and all the town seemed to be alive and full of God, there was no such notion or humour prevailing here. When ministers preached here, as very many did at that time, young and old, our people did not go about to discern whether they were men of experience or not; they did not know that they must. Mr. Stoddard never brought them up in that way; it did not seem natural for them to go about any thing of that nature, nor did any such thing enter into their hearts; but, when any minister preached, the business of every one was to listen and attend to what he said, and apply it to his own heart, and make the utmost improvement of it. And it is remarkable, that never did there appear such a disposition in the people to relish, approve of, and admire ministers' preaching as at that time. Such expressions as these were frequent in the mouths of one another, on occasion of the preaching of strangers here, viz. "That they rejoiced there were so many such eminent ministers in the country; and they wondered they never heard the fame of them before. They were thankful that other towns had so good means;" and the like. And scarcely ever did any minister preach here, but his preaching did some remarkable service; as I had good opportunity to know, because at that time I had particular acquaintance with most of the persons in the town, in their soul-concerns. That it has been so much otherwise of late in many places in the land, is another instance of the secret and powerful influence of custom and example.

There has been an unhappy disposition in some ministers toward their brethren in the ministry in this respect, which

has encouraged and greatly promoted such a spirit among some of their people. A wrong improvement has been made of Christ's scourging the buyers and sellers out of the temple. It has been expected by some, that Christ was now about thus to purge his house of unconverted ministers; and this has made it more natural to them to think that they should do Christ service, and act as co-workers with him, to put to their hand, and endeavour by all means to cashier those ministers that they thought to be unconverted. Indeed it appears to me probable that the time is coming when awful judgments will be executed on unfaithful ministers, and that no sort of men in the world will be so much exposed to divine judgments. But then we should leave that work to Christ, who is the searcher of hearts, and to whom vengeance belongs; and not, without warrant, take the scourge out of his hand into our own. There has been too much of a disposition in some, as it were, to give ministers over as reprobates, being looked upon as wolves in sheep's clothing; which has tended to promote and encourage a spirit of bitterness towards them, and to make it natural to treat them too much as if they knew God hated them. If God's children knew that others were reprobates, it would not be required of them to love them; we may hate those that we know God hates; as it is lawful to hate the devil, and as the saints at the day of judgment will hate the wicked.* Some have been too apt to look for fire from heaven upon particular ministers; and this has naturally excited that disposition to call for it, which Christ rebuked in his disciples at Samaria. For my part, though I believe no sort of men on earth are so exposed to spiritual judgment as wicked ministers, yet I feel no disposition to treat any minister as if I supposed that he was finally rejected of God; for I cannot but hope that there is coming a day of such great grace, a time so appointed for magnifying the riches and sovereignty of divine mercy, beyond what ever was, that a great number of unconverted ministers will obtain mercy. There were no sorts of persons in

* In these expressions our excellent Author is not sufficiently guarded.—Our *knowing* or not *knowing* persons to be reprobates, in any sense of that term, is no sufficient standard of obligation to hate or to love them, in the way of benevolence. The obligation to love or to hate is founded on the nature of the object, as good or bad. But here we are liable to err, for want of discriminating between a *person* and his *criminal qualities*. Now every criminal object should be regarded by us as being possessed of physical powers; but this existence and these powers, being the product of divine bounty, deserve our benevolent approbation, not our hatred. On the other hand, every criminal object, or agent, is chargeable with criminal designs and hateful qualities exclusively his own; and these alone deserve our hatred. In no other sense but this latter can it be truly said that God hates the workers of iniquity, wicked men, or even the devil. But if so, in no other sense or degree ought we to hate them. Had our Author been scientifically acquainted with that principle which accounts for the true origin of moral evil, he would have seen the impropriety of his statement.—W.

Christ's time that were so guilty, and so hardened, and towards whom Christ manifested such great indignation, as the priests and scribes; and there were no such persecutors of Christ and his disciples as they. And yet in that great out-pouring of the Spirit that began on the day of Pentecost, though it began with the common people, yet in the progress of the work, after a while, "a great company of priests in Jerusalem were obedient to the faith," Acts vi. 7. And Saul, one of the most violent of all the persecuting Pharisees, became afterwards the greatest promoter of the work of God that ever was. I hope we shall yet see in many instances a fulfilment of that in Isa. xxix. 24. "They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding, and they that murmured shall learn doctrine."

Nothing has been gained by this practice. The end that some have aimed at in it has not been obtained, nor is ever like to be. Possibly some have openly censured ministers, and encouraged their people's uneasiness under them, in hopes that the uneasiness would be so general, and so great, that unconverted ministers in general would be cast off, and then things would go on happily. But there is no likelihood of it. The devil indeed has obtained his end; this practice has bred a great deal of unhappiness among ministers and people, has spoiled Christians' enjoyment of sabbaths, and made them their most uneasy, uncomfortable and unprofitable days, and has stirred up great contention, and set all in a flame. In one place and another, where there was a glorious work of God's Spirit begun, it has in a great measure knocked all in the head, and their ministers hold their places. Some have aimed at a better end in censuring ministers; they have supposed it to be a likely means to awaken them. Whereas indeed no one thing has had so great a tendency to prevent the awakening of disaffected ministers in general; and no one thing has actually had such influence to lock up the minds of ministers against any good effect of this great work of God in the land. I have known instances of some who seemed to be much moved by the first appearance of this work, but since have seemed to be greatly deadened by what has appeared of this nature. And, if there be one or two instances of ministers who have been awakened by it, there are ten to one on whom it has had a contrary influence. The worst enemies of this work have been inwardly caused by this practice; they have made a shield of it to defend their consciences, and have been glad that it has been carried to so great a length; at the same time that they have looked upon it, and improved it, as a door opened for them to be more bold in opposing the work in general.

There is no such dreadful danger of natural men being undone by our forbearing thus to censure them, and carrying it towards them as visible Christians. It will be no bloody,

hell-peopling charity, as some seem to suppose, when we only allow them to be worthy of a public charity, on their profession and good external behaviour; any more than Judas was in danger of being deceived, by Christ's teaching him a long time as a disciple, and sending him forth as an apostle. Christ did not then take upon him to act as the judge and searcher of hearts, but only as the head of the visible church. Indeed such a charity as this may be abused by some, as every thing is, and will be, that is in its own nature proper, and of never so good tendency. I say nothing against dealing thoroughly with conscience, by the most convincing and searching dispensation of the word of God. I do not desire *that* sword should be sheathed, or gently handled by ministers; but let it be used as a two edged sword, to pierce, even to the dividing asunder soul and spirit, joints and marrow; let conscience be dealt with, without any compliments; let ministers handle it in flaming fire, without having any more mercy on it, than the furnace has on those metals that are tried in it. But we should let men's persons alone; let the word of God judge them, but let us not take it upon us till we have a warrant for it.

Some have been ready to censure ministers because they seem, in comparison of some other ministers, to be very cold and lifeless in their ministerial performances. But then it should be considered, that, for aught we know, God may hereafter raise up ministers of so much more excellent and heavenly qualifications, and so much more spiritual and divine in their performances, that there may appear as great a difference between them, and those who now seem the most lively, as there is now between them, and others that are called dead and sapless. And those that are now called lively ministers may appear to their hearers, when they compare them with others who shall excel them, as wretchedly mean, and their performances poor, dead, dry things; and many may be ready to be prejudiced against them, as accounting them good for nothing, and it may be calling them soul-murderers. What a poor figure may we suppose the most lively of us, and those that are most admired by the people, make in the eyes of one of the saints of heaven, any otherwise than as their deadness, deformity, and rottenness is hid by the vail of Christ's righteousness?

Another thing that has been supposed to be sufficient warrant for openly censuring ministers as unconverted, is their opposing this work of God that has lately been carried on in the land. And there can be no doubt with me but that opposition against this work may be such as to render either ministers or people truly scandalous, and expose them to public ecclesiastical censure; and that ministers hereby may

utterly defeat the design of their ministry, (as I observed before,) and so give their people just cause of uneasiness. I should not think that any person had power to oblige me constantly to attend the ministry of one who did from time to time plainly pray and preach against this work, or speak reproachfully of it frequently in his public performances, after all Christian methods had been used for a remedy, and to no purpose. But to determine how far opposing this work is consistent with a state of grace, is, as experience shews, a very difficult thing. Who can tell how far, and for how long time, some persons of good experence in their own souls may proceed, through prejudices they have received from the errors that have been mixed with this work, or through some peculiar disadvantages they are under to behold things in a right view, by reason of the persons they converse with, or their own cold and dead frames? I have seen what abundantly convinces me, that the business is too high for me; I am glad that God has not committed such a difficult affair to me; I can joyfully leave it wholly in his hands, who is infinitely fit for it, without meddling at all with it myself. We may represent it as exceeding dangerous to oppose this work, for this we have good warrant in the word of God; but I know of no necessity we are under to determine whether it be possible for those that are guilty of it to be in a state of grace or no.

God seems so strictly to have forbidden our judging our brethren in the visible church, not only because he knew that we were infinitely too weak, fallible, and blind, to be well capacitated for it, but also because he knew that it was not a work suited to our proud hearts; that it would be setting us vastly too high, and making us too much of lords over our fellow-creatures. Judging our brethren, and passing a condemnatory sentence upon them, seems to carry in it an act of *authority*, especially to sentence them with respect to that state of their hearts, on which depends their liableness to eternal damnation. This is evident by such interrogations as the following, to hear which from God's mouth, is enough to make us shrink into nothing with shame and confusion, under a sense of our own blindness and worthlessness; Rom. xiv. 4. "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth." And Jam. iv. 12. "There is one lawgiver that is able to save and to destroy; who art thou that judgest another?" Our wise and merciful shepherd has graciously taken care not to lay in our way such a temptation to pride; he has cut up all such poison out of our pasture; and therefore we should not desire to have it restored. Blessed be his name, that he has not laid a temptation in the way of my pride! I know that, in order to be fit for this business, I must

not only be vastly more knowing, but more humble than I am. —Though I believe some of God's own children have of late been very guilty in this matter, yet, by what is said of it in the scripture, it appears to me very likely, that God will awfully rebuke that practice. May it in sovereign and infinite mercy be prevented, by the deep and open humiliation of those that have openly practised it!

As this practice ought to be avoided, so should all such open, visible marks of distinction and separation that imply it, (as particularly, distinguishing such as we have judged to be in a converted state with the compellations of *brother* or *sister*,) any further than there is a visible ecclesiastical distinction. In those places where it is the manner to receive such, and such only, to the communion of the visible church, as recommend themselves by giving a satisfying account of their inward experiences, there Christians may openly distinguish such persons, in their speech and ordinary behaviour, with a visible separation, without being inconsistent with themselves. I do not now pretend to meddle with that controversy, whether such an account of experience be requisite to church-fellowship. But certainly, to admit persons to communion with us as brethren in the visible church, and then visibly to reject them, and to make an open distinction between them and others, by different names or appellations, is to be inconsistent with ourselves. It is to make a visible church within a visible church, and visibly to divide between sheep and goats, setting one on the right hand, and the other on the left.—This bitter root of censoriousness must be totally rooted out, as we would prepare the way of the Lord. It has nourished and upheld many other things contrary to the humility, meekness, and love of the gospel. The minds of many have received an unhappy turn with their religion: there is a certain point or sharpness, a disposition to a kind of warmth, that does not savour of that meek, lamb-like, sweet disposition that becomes Christians. Many have now been so long habituated to it, that they do not know how to get out of it; but we must get out of it; the point and sharpness must be blunted, and we must learn another way of manifesting our zeal for God.

Some have a way of reflecting on others, and censuring them in open prayer; which, though it has a fair shew of love, is indeed the boldest way of reproaching others imaginable; because there is implied in it an appeal to the most high God, concerning the truth of their censures and reflections.— And some have a way of joining a sort of imprecations with their petitions for others, though but conditional ones, that appear to me wholly needless and improper. They pray that others may either be converted or removed. I never heard nor read of any such thing practised in the church of God

till now, unless it be with respect to some of the most visibly and notoriously abandoned enemies of the church of God. This is a sort of cursing men in our prayers, adding a curse with our blessing; whereas the rule is, "Bless, and curse not." To pray that God would kill another, is to curse him as Elisha cursed the children who came out of Bethel. And the case must be very great and extraordinary indeed to warrant it, unless we were prophets, and did not speak our own words, but words indited by the immediate inspiration of the Spirit of God. It is pleaded, that if God has no design of converting others, it is best for them and others, that they should be immediately taken away and sent to hell before they have contracted more guilt. To which I would say, that so it was best for those children who met Elisha, seeing God had no design of converting them, to die immediately, as they did; but yet Elisha's imprecating that sudden death upon them, was cursing them; and therefore would not have been lawful for one who did not speak in the name of the Lord as a prophet.—And then, if we give way to such things as these, where shall we stop? A child that suspects he has an unconverted father and mother, may pray openly that his father and mother may either be converted, or taken away and sent to hell now quickly, before their guilt is greater. For unconverted parents are as likely to poison the souls of their family in their manner of training them up, as unconverted ministers are to poison their people. And so it might come to be a common thing all over the country, for children to pray after this manner concerning their parents, brethren and sisters concerning one another, husbands concerning their wives, and wives concerning their husbands; and so for persons to pray concerning all their unconverted friends and neighbours. And not only so, but we may also pray concerning all those saints who are not lively Christians, that they may either be enlivened or taken away; if that be true which is often said by some at this day, that these cold dead saints do more hurt than natural men, and lead more souls to hell, and that it would be well for mankind if they were all dead.

How needless are such petitions or imprecations as these? What benefit is there of them? Is it not sufficient for us to pray that God would provide for his church and the good of souls, take care of his own flock, and give it needful means and advantages for its spiritual prosperity? Does God need to be directed by us in what way he shall do it? What need we ask of God to do it by killing such and such persons, if he do not convert them? unless we delight in the thoughts of God's answering us in such terrible ways, and with such awful manifestations of his wrath to our fellow-creatures.—And why do not ministers direct sinners to pray for them-

selves, that God would either convert them, or kill them, and send them to hell now, before their guilt is greater? In this way we should lead persons in the next place to self-murder; for many probably would soon begin to think, that what they may pray for, they may seek by the use of means.

Some, with whom I have discoursed about this way of praying, have said, That the Spirit of God, as it were, forces out such words from their mouths, when otherwise they should not dare to utter them. But such kind of impulse does not look like the influence of the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God indeed sometimes strongly inclines men to utter words; not by putting expressions into the mouth, and urging to utter them, but by filling the heart with a sense of divine things, and holy affections, whence the mouth speaks. That other way of being urged to use certain expressions, by an unaccountable force, is very probably from the influence of the devil.

SECT. V.

Of errors connected with lay-exhorting.

Another thing, in the management of which there has been much error and misconduct, is lay-exhorting; about which there has been an abundance of disputing, jangling, and contention. In the midst of these disputes, I suppose that all are agreed as to these two things, viz. 1. That all exhorting one another by lay-men is not unlawful or improper; but, on the contrary, that such exhorting is a Christian duty. And, 2. I suppose also, all will allow that there is some kind or way of exhorting and teaching which belongs only to *the office of teachers*. All will allow that God has appointed such an office as that of *teachers* in the Christian church, and therefore doubtless will allow that something or other is proper and peculiar to that office, or some business of teaching that does not belong as much to others as to them. If there be any way of teaching that is peculiar to that office, then for others to take that upon them, is to invade the office of a minister; which doubtless is very sinful, and is often so represented in scripture. But the great difficulty is to settle the bounds, and to tell exactly how far lay-men may go, and when they exceed their limits; which is a matter of so much difficulty, that I do not wonder if many in their zeal have transgressed. The two ways of teaching and exhorting, the one of which ought ordinarily to be left to ministers, and the other of which may and ought to be practised by the people, may be expressed by those two names of *preaching*, and *exhorting* in a way of

Christian conversation. But then a great deal of difficulty and controversy arises to determine what is preaching and what is Christian conversation. However, I will humbly offer my thoughts concerning this subject of lay-exhorting, as follows.

I. The common people, in exhorting one another, ought not to clothe themselves with the like authority with that which is proper for ministers. There is a certain authority that ministers have and should exercise in teaching, as well as in governing the flock. Teaching is spoken of in scripture as an act of authority, 1 Tim. ii. 12. In order to a man's preaching, special authority must be committed to him, Rom. x. 15. "How shall they preach, except they be sent?" Ministers in this work of teaching and exhorting are clothed with authority, as Christ's messengers, Mal. ii. 7. as representing him, and so speaking in his name, and in his stead, 2 Cor. v. 18—20. And it seems to be the most honourable thing that belongs to the office of a minister of the gospel, that to him is committed the work of reconciliation, and that he has power to preach the gospel, as Christ's messenger, and speaking in his name. The apostle seems to speak of it as such, 1 Cor. i. 16, 17. Ministers, therefore, in the exercise of this power, may clothe themselves with authority in speaking, or may teach others in an authoritative manner, Tit. ii. 15. "These things speak and exhort, and rebuke with all authority: Let no man despise thee." But the common people, in exhorting one another, ought not thus to exhort in an authoritative manner. There is a great deal of difference between teaching as a *father* amongst a company of children, and counselling in a *brotherly* way, as the children may kindly counsel and admonish one another. Those that are mere brethren ought not to assume authority in exhorting, though one may be better, and have more experience than another. Lay-men ought not to exhort as though they were the ambassadors or messengers of Christ, as ministers do; nor should they exhort, warn, and charge *in his name*, according to the ordinary import of such an expression, when applied to teaching. —Indeed, in one sense, a Christian ought to do every thing he does in religion in the name of Christ, *i. e.* he ought to act in a dependence on him as his head and mediator, and do all for his glory. But the expression, as it is usually understood, when applied to teaching or exhorting, is speaking in Christ's stead, and as having a message from him.

Persons may clothe themselves with authority in speaking, either by the authoritative words they make use of, or in the manner and authoritative air of their speaking. Though some may think that this latter is a matter of indifference, or at least of small importance, yet there is indeed a great deal in it; a

person may go much out of his place, and be guilty of a great degree of assuming, in the manner of his speaking those words, which as they might be spoken, might be proper for him.—The same words, spoken in a different manner, may express what is very diverse. Doubtless there may be as much hurt in the manner of a person's speaking, as there may be in his looks; but the wise man tells us, that "an high look is an abomination to the Lord," Prov. xxi. 4. Again, a man may clothe himself with authority, in the circumstances under which he speaks; as for instance, if he sets himself up as a *public teacher*. Here I would have it observed, that I do not suppose that a person is guilty of this, merely because he speaks in the hearing of many. Persons may speak only in a way of conversation, and yet speak in the hearing of a great number, as they often do in their common conversation about temporal things, at feasts and entertainments, where women as well as others converse freely together, in the hearing it may be of a great number, and yet without offence. And if their conversation on such occasions should turn on spiritual things, and they should speak as freely and openly, I do not see why it would not be as harmless. Nor do I think, that besides a great number being present, persons speaking with a very earnest and loud voice, is for them to set up themselves as public teachers, if they do it from no contrivance or premeditated design, or as purposely directing themselves to a congregation or multitude. But persons speaking in conversation, or when all freely converse one with another—directing themselves to none but those that are near them, and fall in their way—in that earnest and pathetic manner, to which the subject naturally leads, and as it were, constrains them; I say, that for persons to do thus, though many happen to hear them, does not appear to me to be setting themselves up as public teachers. Yea, suppose all this happens to be in a meeting-house; I do not think that this much alters the case, provided the solemnity of public service and divine ordinances be over; and provided also that they speak in no authoritative way, but in an humble manner, becoming their degree and station, though they speak very earnestly and pathetically.—Indeed modesty might in ordinary cases restrain some persons, (as women and those that are young,) from so much as speaking when a great number are present, at least, when some of those present are much their superiors, unless they are spoken to. And yet, the case may be so extraordinary as fully to warrant it. If something very extraordinary happens to persons, or if they are in extraordinary circumstances; as if a person be struck with lightning in the midst of a great company, or if he lies a-dying, it appears to none any violation of modesty for him to speak freely before those that are much his superiors. I have seen some women

and children in such circumstances, on religious accounts, that it has appeared to me no more a transgressing the laws of humility and modesty for them to speak freely, let who will be present, than if they were in danger of dying.

But then may a man be said to set up himself as a public teacher, when in a set speech, of design, he directs himself to a multitude, as looking that they should compose themselves to attend to what he has to say. And much more when this is a contrived and premeditated thing, without any thing like a constraint by an extraordinary sense or affection; and more still, when meetings are appointed on purpose to hear lay-persons exhort, and they take it as their business to be speakers, while they expect that others should come, and compose themselves, and attend as hearers. When private Christians take it upon them in private meetings to act as the masters or presidents of the assembly, and accordingly from time to time to teach and exhort the rest, this has the appearance of authoritative teaching.

When private Christians, who are no more than mere brethren, exhort and admonish one another, it ought to be in an humble manner, rather by way of entreaty, than with authority; and the more, according as the station of persons is lower. Thus it becomes women, and those that are young, ordinarily to be at a greater distance from any apearance of authority in speaking than others. Thus much at least is evident by 1 Tim. ii. 9, 11, 12. That lay-persons ought not to exhort one another as clothed with authority, is a general rule; but it cannot justly be supposed to extend to heads of families in their own families. Every Christian family is a little church, and the heads of it are its authoritative teachers and governors. Nor can it extend to schoolmasters among their scholars; and some other cases might perhaps be mentioned, that ordinary discretion will distinguish, where a man's circumstances do properly clothe him with authority, and render it fit and suitable for him to counsel and admonish others in an authoritative manner.

II. No man but a minister duly appointed to that sacred calling, ought to follow teaching and exhorting as a calling, or so as to neglect that which is his proper calling. Having the office of a teacher in the church of God implies two things: 1. A being invested with the *authority* of a teacher; and, 2. A being called to the *business* of a teacher, to make it the business of his life. Therefore that man who is not a minister, taking either of these upon him, invades the office of a minister. Concerning assuming the authority of a minister I have spoken already. But if a lay-man do not assume authority in his teaching, yet if he forsakes his proper calling, or doth so at

least in a great measure, and spends his time in going about from house to house to counsel and exhort, he goes beyond his line, and violates Christian rules. Those that have the office of teachers or exhorters, have it for their calling, and should make it their business, as a business proper to their office; and none should make it their business but such, Rom. xii. 3—8. "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the proportion of faith. For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office; so we, being many, are one body in Christ. He that teacheth, let him wait on teaching; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation." 1 Cor. xii. 29. "Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers?" 1 Cor. vii. 20. "Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called." 1 Thess. iv. 11. "And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you."

It will be a very dangerous thing for lay-men, in either of these respects, to invade the office of a minister. If this be common among us, we shall be in danger of having a stop put to the work of God, of the ark turning aside from us, before it comes to Mount Zion, and of God making a breach upon us; as of old there was an unhappy stop put to the joy of the congregation of Israel, in bringing up the ark of God, because others carried it besides the Levites. And therefore David, when the error was found out, says, 1 Chron. xv. 2. "None ought to carry the ark of God, but the Levites only; for them hath the Lord chosen to carry the ark of God, and to minister unto him for ever." And because one presumed to touch the ark who was not of the sons of Aaron, therefore the Lord made a breach upon them, and covered their day of rejoicing with a cloud in his anger.—Before I dismiss this head of lay-exhorting, I would take notice of three things relating to it, upon which there ought to be a restraint.

1. Speaking in the time of the solemn worship of God; as public prayer, singing, or preaching, or administration of the Sacrament of the Holy Supper, or any duty of social worship. This should not be allowed. I know it will be said, that in some cases, when persons are exceedingly affected, they cannot help it; and I believe so too; but then I also believe and know by experience, that there are several things which contribute to that inability, besides merely and absolutely the sense of divine things upon their hearts. Custom and example or the thing being allowed, have such an influence, that they actually help to make it impossible for persons under strong affections to avoid speaking. If it was disallowed, and persons at the time that they were thus disposed to break out, had this

apprehension, that it would be very unbecoming for them so to do, it would contribute to their ability to avoid it. Their inability arises from their strong and vehement disposition; and, so far as that disposition is from a good principle, it would be weakened by this thought, viz. "What I am going to do, will be for the dishonour of Christ and religion." And so the inward vehemence, that pushed them forward to speak, would fall, and they would be enabled to avoid it. This experience confirms.

2. There ought to be a moderate restraint on the loudness of persons' talking under high affections; for, if there be not, it will grow natural and unavoidable for persons to be louder and louder, without any increase of their inward sense; till it becomes natural to them, at last, to scream and halloo to almost every one they see in the streets, when they are much affected. But this is certainly very improper, and what has no tendency to promote religion. The man Christ Jesus, when he was upon earth, had doubtless as great a sense of the infinite greatness and importance of eternal things, and the worth of souls, as any have now; but there is not the least appearance in his history, of his taking any such course, or manner of exhorting others.

3. There should also be some restraint on the abundance of talk, under strong affections; for, if persons give themselves an unbounded liberty to talk just so much as they feel an inclination to, they will increase and abound more and more in talk, beyond the proportion of their sense or affection; till at length it will become ineffectual on those that hear them, and, by the commonness of their abundant talk, they will defeat their own end.

SECT. VI.

Of errors connected with singing praises to God.

One thing more of which I would take notice, before I conclude this part, is the mismanagement of singing praises to God. I believe it to have been one fruit of the extraordinary degrees of the sweet and joyful influence of the Spirit of God, that there has appeared such a disposition to abound in this divine exercise; not only in appointed solemn meetings, but when Christians occasionally meet together at each other's houses. But the mismanagement I have respect to is a way of performing it, without almost any appearance of that reverence and solemnity with which all visible, open acts of divine worship, ought to be attended. It may be two or three are in a room singing hymns of

praise to God, others talking at the same time, others about their work, with little more appearance of regard to what is doing, than if only singing a common song for their amusement and diversion. There is danger, if such things are continued, that a mere nothing be made of this duty, to the great violation of the third commandment. Let Christians abound as much as they will in this holy, heavenly exercise, in God's house and in their own houses; but, let it be performed as a holy act, wherein they have immediately and visibly to do with God. When any social open act of devotion or solemn worship of God is performed, God should be reverenced as present. As we would not have the ark of God depart from us, nor provoke God to make a breach upon us, we should take heed that we handle the ark with reverence.

With respect to companies singing in the streets, going to or coming from the place of public worship, I would humbly offer my thoughts in the following particulars:

1. The rule of Christ, concerning "putting new wine into old bottles," does undoubtedly take place in things of this nature, supposing the thing in itself is good, but not essential, and not particularly enjoined or forbidden. For things so very new and uncommon, and of so open and public a nature, to be suddenly introduced and set up and practised in many parts of the country, without the matter being so much as first proposed to any public consideration, or giving any opportunity for the people of God to weigh the matter, or to consider any reasons that might be offered to support it, is putting new wine into old bottles with a witness; as if it were with no other design than to burst them directly. Nothing else can be expected to be the consequence of this than uproar and confusion, great offence, and unhappy mischievous disputes, even among the children of God themselves. Not that what is good in itself, and is new, ought to be forborne, till there is nobody that will like it; but it ought to be forborne till the visible church of God is so prepared for it, at least, that there is a probability it will do more hurt than good, or hinder the work of God more than promote it; as is more evident from Christ's rule, and the apostle's practice. If it be brought in when the country is so unprepared, that the shock and surprise, the contention and prejudice against religion it is like to occasion, will do more to hinder religion, than the practice is like to promote it, then the fruit is picked before it is ripe. And, indeed, such a hasty endeavour to introduce an innovation, supposing it to be good in itself, is the likeliest way to retard the effectual introduction of it; it will hinder its being extensively introduced, much more than it will promote it, and so will defeat its own end. But,

2. As to the thing itself, if a considerable part of a congregation have occasion to go in company together to a place of public worship, and they should join together in singing praises to God, as they go, I confess, that after long consideration—and endeavouring to view the thing every way with the utmost diligence and impartiality I am capable of—I cannot find any valid objection against it. As to the common objection from Matt. vi. 5, "And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are; for they love to pray, standing in the synagogues, and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men;" it is strong against a single person singing in the streets, or in the meeting-house by himself, as offering to God personal worship. But as it is brought against a considerable company, their thus publicly worshipping God, appears to me to have no weight at all; it is of no more force against a company's thus praising God in the streets, than against their praising him in the synagogues, or meeting-houses; for the streets and the synagogues are both put together in these words of our Saviour, as parallel in the case. It is evident that Christ speaks of personal, and not public worship. If to sing in the streets be ostentatious, then it must be because it is a public place, and it cannot be done there without being very open; but it is no more public than the synagogue or meeting-house is when full of people. Some worship is in its nature private, as that which is proper to particular persons, or families, or private societies, and has respect to their particular concerns; but that which I now speak of, is performed under no other notion than a part of God's public worship, without any relation to any private, separate society, and in which every visible Christian has equal liberty to join, if it be convenient for him, and he has a disposition, as in the worship that is performed in the meeting-house. When persons are going to the house of public worship, to serve God there with the assembly of his people, they are upon no other design than that of putting public honour upon God; that is the business they go from home upon; and, even in their walking the streets on this errand, they appear in a public act of respect to God; and therefore, if they go in company with public praise, it is not being public when they ought to be private. It is one part of the beauty of public worship, that it be *very public;* the more public it is, the more open honour it puts upon God; and especially is it beautiful in *public praise;* for the very notion of publicly praising God, is to declare abroad his glory, to publish his praise, to make it known, and proclaim it aloud, as is evident by innumerable expressions of scripture. It is fit that God's honour should not be concealed, but made known in the great congregation, and proclaimed before the sun. and upon the

house-tops, before kings and all nations, and that his praises should be heard to the utmost ends of the earth.

I suppose none will condemn singing God's praises merely because it is performed in the open air; and, if it may be performed by a company in the open air, doubtless they may do it moving, as well as standing still. So the children of Israel praised God, when they went to Mount Zion with the ark of God; and the multitude praised Christ, when they entered with him into Jerusalem, a little before his passion. The children of Israel were wont, from year to year, to go up to Jerusalem in companies, from all parts of the land, three times in the year, when they often used to manifest the engagedness of their minds by travelling all night, and manifested their joy and gladness by singing praises with great decency and beauty, as they went towards God's holy mountain; as is evident by Isa. xxx. 29. "Ye shall have a song, as in the night when a holy solemnity is kept; and gladness of heart, as when one goeth with a pipe to come into the mountain of the Lord, to the mighty one of Israel." And Psal. xlii. 4. "When I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me; for I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holyday." Psal. c. 4. "Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise." When God's people are going to his house, the occasion is so joyful to a Christian in a lively frame, that the duty of singing praises seems to be peculiarly beautiful on such an occasion. So that if the state of the country were ripe for it, and there should be frequent occasions for a considerable part of a congregation to go together to the places of public worship, and there was in other respects a proportionable appearance of fervency of devotion, it appears to me that it would be ravishingly beautiful, if such things were practised all over the land, and would have a great tendency to enliven, animate, and rejoice the souls of God's saints, and greatly to propagate vital religion. I believe the time is coming when the world will be full of such things.

3. It seems to me to be requisite that there should be the consent of the governing part of the worshipping societies, to which persons have joined themselves, and of which they own themselves a part, in order to the introducing of things in public worship, so new and uncommon, and not essential, nor particularly commanded, into the places where those worshipping societies belong. The peace and union of such societies seems to require it. They have voluntarily united themselves to these worshipping societies, to the end that they might be one in the affairs of God's public worship, and have obliged themselves in covenant to act as brethren, mutual assistants, and members of one body in those affairs. All are

hereby naturally and necessarily led to be concerned with one another, in matters of religion and God's worship; and this is a part of the public worship, that must be performed from time to time in the view of the whole, being performed at a time when they are meeting together for mutual assistance in worship, and therefore that which all must unavoidably be in some measure concerned in, at least so as to shew their approbation and consent, or open dislike and separation from them in it. Hence charity, and a regard to the union and peace of such societies, seems to require a consent of the governing part, in order to the introducing any thing of this nature. Certainly if we are of the spirit of the apostle Paul, and have his discretion, we shall not set up any such practice without it. He, for the sake of peace, confirmed in things wherein he was not particularly forbidden, to the Jews when among them; and so, when among those that were without the law, he conformed to them wherein he might.——To be sure, those go much beyond proper limits, who, coming from abroad, do immediately of their own heads, in a strange place, set up such a new and uncommon practice among a people.

In introducing any thing of this nature among a people, their minister especially ought to be consulted, and his voice taken, as long as he is owned for their minister. Ministers are pastors of worshipping societies, and their heads and guides in the affairs of public worship. They are called in scripture, "those that rule over them;" and their people are commanded "to obey them, because they watch for their souls, as those that must give account." If it belongs to these shepherds and rulers to direct and guide the flock in any thing at all, it belongs to them so to do in the circumstantials of their public worship.—Thus I have taken particular notice of many of those things that have appeared to me to be amiss in the management of our religious concerns relating to the present revival of religion, and have taken liberty freely to express my thoughts upon them. Upon the whole it appears manifest to me, that things have as yet never been set a going in their right channel; if they had, and means had been blessed in proportion as they have been now, this work would have so prevailed, as before this time to have carried all before it, and have triumphed over New England as its conquest.

The devil in driving things to these extremes, besides the present hinderance of the work of God, has, I believe, had in view a two-fold mischief, in the issue of things; one, with respect to those that are more cold in religion, to carry things to such an extreme in order that people in general, having their eyes opened by the great excess, might be tempted entirely to reject the whole work, as being all nothing but delusion and distraction. And another, with respect to those of God's

children who have been very warm and zealous out of the way, to sink them down in unbelief and darkness. The time is coming, I doubt not, when the greater part of them will be convinced of their errors; and then probably the devil will take advantage to lead them into a dreadful wilderness, to puzzle and confound them about their own experiences, and the experiences of others; and to make them to doubt of many things that they ought not, and even to tempt them with atheistical thoughts. I believe, if all true Christians over the land should now at once have their eyes opened fully to see all their errors, it would seem for the present to damp religion. The dark thoughts that it would at first occasion, and the inward doubts, difficulties and conflicts that would rise in their souls, would deaden their lively affections and joys, and would cause an appearance of a present decay of religion. But yet it would do God's saints great good in their latter end; it would fit them for more spiritual and excellent experiences, more humble and heavenly love, and unmixed joys, and would greatly tend to a more powerful, extensive and durable prevalence of vital piety. I do not know but we shall be in danger, after our eyes are fully opened to see our errors, to go to contrary extremes. The devil has driven the *pendulum* far beyond its proper point of rest; and when he has carried it to the utmost length that he can, and it begins by its own weight to swing back, he probably will set in, and drive it with the utmost fury the other way; and so give us no rest; and if possible prevent our settling in a proper medium. What a poor, blind, weak and miserable creature is man, at his best estate! We are like poor helpless sheep; the devil is too subtile for us. What is our strength! What is our wisdom! How ready are we to go astray! How easily are we drawn aside into innumerable snares, while in the mean time we are bold and confident, and doubt not but we are right and safe! We are foolish sheep in the midst of subtile serpents and cruel wolves, and do not know it. Oh how unfit are we to be left to ourselves! And how much do we stand in need of the wisdom, the power, the condescension, patience, forgiveness and gentleness of our good Shepherd!

PART V.

SHEWING POSITIVELY, WHAT OUGHT TO BE DONE TO PROMOTE THIS WORK.

In considering means and methods for promoting this glorious work of God, I have already observed, in some instances, wherein there has been needless objecting and complaining; and have also taken notice of many things amiss, that ought to be amended. I now proceed to shew positively, what ought to be done, or what courses (according to my humble opinion) ought to be taken to promote this work. The obligations that all are under, with one consent, to do their utmost, and the great danger of neglecting it, were observed before.—I hope that some, upon reading what was said under that head, will be ready to say, What shall we do? To such readers I would now offer my thoughts, in answer to such an inquiry.

SECT. I.

We should endeavour to remove Stumbling-blocks.

That which I think we ought to set ourselves about, in the first place, is to remove stumbling-blocks. When God is revealed as about to come gloriously to set up his kingdom in the world, this is proclaimed, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God," Isa. xl. 3. And again, Isa. lvii. 14. "Cast ye up, cast ye up; prepare the way; take up the stumbling-block out of the way of my people." And chap. lxii. 10. "Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones."

And, in order to this, there must be a great deal done at confessing of faults, on both sides. For undoubtedly many and great are the faults that have been committed, in the jangling and confusions, and mixtures of light and darkness, that have been of late. There is hardly any duty more contrary to our corrupt dispositions, and mortifying to the pride of man; but it must be done. Repentance of faults is, in a

peculiar manner a proper duty, when the kingdom of heaven is at hand, or when we especially expect or desire, that it should come; as appears by John the Baptist's preaching. And if God does now loudly call upon us to repent, then he also calls upon us to make proper manifestations of our repentance. I am persuaded that those who have openly opposed this work, or have from time to time spoken lightly of it, cannot be excused in the sight of God, without openly confessing their fault therein; especially ministers. If they have any way, either directly or indirectly, opposed the work, or have so behaved, in their public performances or private conversation, as to prejudice the minds of their people against the work; if hereafter they shall be convinced of the goodness and divinity of what they have opposed, they ought by no means to palliate the matter, or excuse themselves, and pretend that they always thought so, and that it was only such and such imprudences that they objected against. But they ought openly to declare their conviction, and condemn themselves for what they have done; for it is Christ that they have spoken against, in speaking lightly of and prejudicing others against this work; yea, it is the Holy Ghost. And though they have done it ignorantly and in unbelief, yet, when they find out who it is that they have opposed, undoubtedly God will hold them bound publicly to confess it.

And on the other side, if those who have been zealous to promote the work, have in any of the forementioned instances openly gone much out of the way, and done that which is contrary to Christian rules, whereby they have openly injured others, or greatly violated good order, and so done that which has wounded religion, they must publicly confess it, and humble themselves; as they would gather out the stones, and prepare the way of God's people. They who have laid great stumbling-blocks in others' way, by their *open transgression*, are bound to remove them by their *open repentance.*

Some probably will be ready to object against this, that the opposers will take advantage by this to behave themselves insolently, and to insult both them and religion. And indeed, to the shame of some, they have taken advantage by such things; as of the good spirit that Mr. Whitfield showed in his retractions and some others. But if there are some embittered enemies of religion, that stand ready to improve every thing to its disadvantage, yet that ought not to hinder doing an enjoined Christian duty; though it be in the manifestation of humility and repentance, after a fault openly committed. To stand it out, in a visible impenitence of a real fault, to avoid such an inconvenience, is to do evil in order to prevent evil. Besides, the danger of evil consequence is much greater

on the other side: to commit sin, and then stand in it, is what will give the enemy the greatest advantage. For Christians to act like Christians, in openly humbling themselves when they have openly offended, in the end brings the greatest honour to Christ and religion; and in this way are persons most likely to have God appear for them.

Again, at such a day as this, God especially calls his people to the exercise of extraordinary meekness and mutual forbearance. Christ appears as it were coming in his kingdom, which calls for great moderation in our behaviour towards all men: Phil. iv. 5. "Let your moderation be known unto all men: The Lord is at hand." The awe of the Divine Majesty, that appears present or approaching, should dispose us to it, and deter us from the contrary. For us to be judging one another, and behaving with fierceness and bitterness one towards another, when he who is the searcher of all hearts, to whom we must all give an account, appears so remarkably present, is exceeding unsuitable. Our business at such a time should be at home, searching and condemning ourselves, and taking heed to our own behaviour. If there be glorious prosperity to the church of God approaching, those that are the most meek will have the largest share in it. For, when Christ "rides forth in his glory and his majesty, it is because of truth, meekness, and righteousness," Psal. xlv. 3, 4; and, when God remarkably "arises to execute judgment," it is "to save all the meek of the earth," Psal. lxxvi. 9; and it is "the meek" that "shall increase their joy in the Lord," Isa. xxix. 19. And, when the time comes that God will give this lower world into the hands of his saints, it is "the meek that shall inherit the earth," Psal. xxxvii. 11. and Matt. v. 9. "But with the froward God will shew himself unsavoury."

Those therefore that have been zealous for this work, and have greatly erred and been injurious with their zeal, ought not to be treated with bitterness. There is abundant reason to think, that most of them are the dear children of God, for whom Christ died; and therefore that they will see their error. As to those things, wherein we see them to be in an error, we have reason to say of them as the apostle, Phil. iii. 15. "If any are otherwise minded, God shall reveal this unto them." Their errors should not be made use of to excite indignation towards them, but should influence all who hope we are the children of God, to humble ourselves, and become more entirely dependent on the Lord Jesus Christ, when we see those who are God's own people so ready to go astray. And those ministers who have been judged, and injuriously dealt with, will do the part of Christ's disciples, not to judge and revile again, but to receive such injuries with meekness and forbearance, and making a good improvement of them. more strictly

examining their hearts and ways, and committing themselves to God. This will be the way to have God vindicate them in his providence, if they belong to him. We have not yet seen the end of things; nor do we know who will be most vindicated, and honoured of God, in the issue. Eccles. vii. 8. "Better is the end of a thing, than the beginning thereof; and the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit."—Contrary to this mutual meekness, is each party's stigmatizing one another with odious names, as is done in many parts of New England; which tends greatly to widen and perpetuate the breach. Such distinguishing names of reproach do as it were divide us into two armies, separated, and drawn up in battle-array; which greatly hinders the work of God.

And as such an extraordinary time as this does especially require of us the exercise of great forbearance *one towards another;* so there is peculiarly requisite in God's people the exercise of great patience, in waiting *on God*, under any special difficulties and disadvantages they may be under as to the means of grace. The beginning of a revival of religion will naturally and necessarily be attended with a great many difficulties of this nature; many parts of the reviving church will, for a while, be under great disadvantages, by reason of what remains of the old disease, of a general corruption of the visible church. We cannot expect that, after a long time of degeneracy and depravity in the state of things in the church, all should come to rights at once; it must be a work of time. And for God's people to be over-hasty and violent in such a case, being resolved to have every thing rectified at once, or else forcibly to deliver themselves by breaches and separations, is the way to hinder things coming to rights as they otherwise would. It is the way to keep them back, and to break all in pieces. Indeed the difficulty may be so intolerable as to allow of no delay, and God's people cannot continue in the state wherein they were, without violations of God's absolute commands: but otherwise, though the difficulty may be very great, another course should be taken. God's people should have recourse directly to the throne of grace, to represent their difficulties before the great Shepherd of the sheep, who has the care of all the affairs of his church; and, when they have done, they should wait patiently upon him. If they do so, they may expect that in his time he will appear for their deliverance; but if, instead of that, they are impatient, and take the work into their own hands, they will betray their want of faith, will dishonour God, and have reason to fear that he will leave them to manage their affairs for themselves as well as they can. If they had waited on Christ patiently, continuing still instant in prayer, they might have had him appearing for them, much more effectually

to deliver them. "He that believeth shall not make haste." And it is for those that are found patiently waiting on the Lord, under difficulties, that he will especially appear, when he comes to do great things for his church; as is evident by Isa. xxx. 18. chap. xl. at the latter end, and xlix. 23. and Psalm xxxvii. 9. and many other places.

I have somewhere, not long since, met with an exposition of those words of the spouse, several times repeated in the book of Canticles; "I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, till he please." It was the only satisfying exposition that ever I met with, and was to this purpose, viz. That when the church of God is under great difficulties, and in distress, and Christ does not appear for her help, but seems to neglect her, as though he were asleep, God's people, or the daughters of Jerusalem, in such a case, should not shew an hasty spirit, and, not having patience to wait for Christ to awake for their help till his time comes, take indirect courses for their own deliverance, and use violent means for their escape, before Christ appears to open the door for them; and so, as it were, *stir up, and awake Christ*, before his time. When the church is in distress, and God seems not to appear for her in his providence, he is very often represented in scripture as being asleep; as Christ was asleep in the ship, when the disciples were tossed by the storm, and the ship covered with waves. And God's appearing for his people's help, is represented as his waking out of sleep. Psal. vii. 6. xxxv. 23. xliv. 23. lix. 4. lxxiii. 20. Christ has an appointed time for his thus awaking out of sleep; and his people ought to wait upon him, and not, in an impatient fit, stir him up before his time. It is worthy to be observed, how strict this charge is given to the daughters of Jerusalem; it is repeated three times over in the book of Canticles, chap. ii. 7.—iii. 5.—viii. 4. In the 2d chapter and six first verses are represented the support Christ gives his church, while she is in a suffering state, "as the lily among thorns." In the 7th verse is represented her patience in waiting for Christ, to appear for her deliverance, when she charges the daughters of Jerusalem not to stir up, nor awake her love till he please, "by the roes and the hinds of the field;" which are creatures of a gentle, harmless nature. They are not beasts of prey, do not devour one another, do not fight with their enemies, but flee from them; and are of a pleasant, loving nature, Prov. v. 19. In the next verse, we see the church's success, in this way of waiting under sufferings, with meekness and patience; Christ soon awakes, speedily appears, and swiftly comes; "The voice of my beloved! Behold, he cometh, leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills!"

SECT. II.

What must be done more directly to advance this work.

What has been mentioned hitherto, has relation to the behaviour we are obliged to, as we would prevent the hinderances of the work; but, besides these, there are things that must be *done*, more directly to advance it. And here it concerns every one, in the first place, to look into his own heart, and see to it that he be a partaker of the benefits of the work himself, and that it be promoted in his own soul. Now is a most glorious opportunity for the good of souls. It is manifestly with respect to a time of great revival of religion in the world, that we have that gracious, earnest, and moving invitation proclaimed in the 55th of Isaiah, "Ho, every one that thirsteth," &c. as is evident by the foregoing chapter, and what follows in the close of this. In the 6th verse, it is said, "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near." And it is with special reference to such a time, that Christ proclaims as he does, Rev. xxi. 6. "I will give unto him that is athirst, of the fountain of the water of life freely." And chap. xxii. 17. "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come; and let him that heareth say, Come; and let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." And it seems to be with reference to such a time, which is typified by the *feast of tabernacles*, that Jesus, at that feast, stood and cried, as we have an account, John vii. 37, 38. "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." And it is with special reference to God's freeness and readiness to bestow grace at such a time, that it is said in Isa. lx. 11. of the spiritual Jerusalem, "Thy gates shall be open continually, they shall not be shut day nor night."

And though I judge not those who have opposed this work, and would not have others judge them, yet, if any such shall happen to read this treatise, I would take the liberty to entreat them to leave off troubling themselves so much about others, and to look into their own souls, and see to it that they are the subjects of a true, saving work of the Spirit of God.—If they have reason to think they never have been, or if it be but a very doubtful hope that they have, then how can they have any heart to be fiercely engaged about the mistakes and the supposed false hopes of others? And I would now beseech those who have hitherto been

somewhat inclining to Arminian principles, seriously to weigh the matter with respect to this work, and consider, whether, if the scriptures are the word of God, the work that has been described in the first part of this treatise must not be, as to the substance of it, the work of God, and the flourishing of that religion which is taught by Christ and his apostles. Can any good medium be found, where a man can rest with any stability, between owning this work, and being a deist? If indeed this be the work of God, does it not entirely overthrow their scheme of religion; and does it not infinitely concern them, as they would be partakers of eternal salvation, to relinquish their scheme? Now is a good time for Arminians to change their principles. I would now, as one of the friends of this work, humbly invite them to come and join with us, and be on our side; and, if I had the authority of Moses, I would say to them as he did to Hobab, Numb. x. 29. "We are journeying unto the place, of which the Lord said, I will give it you; come thou with us, and we will do thee good: for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel."

As the benefit and advantage of the good improvement of such a season is very great, so the danger of neglecting and misimproving it is proportionably great. It is abundantly evident by the scripture, that as a time of great out-pouring of the Spirit is a time of great favour to those who are partakers of the blessing, so it is always a time of remarkable vengeance to others. So in Isa. lxi. 2. what is called, "the acceptable year of the Lord," is also called "the day of vengeance of our God." So it was amongst the Jews, in the apostles' days. The apostle in 2 Cor. vi. 2. says of that time, that it was "the accepted time and day of salvation;" and Christ says of the same time, Luke xxi. 22. "These are the days of vengeance." While the blessings of the kingdom of heaven were given to some, there was an "axe laid at the root of the trees, that those that did not bear fruit, might be hewn down, and cast into the fire," Matt. iii. 9—11. Then was glorified both the goodness and severity of God, in a remarkable manner, Rom. xi. 22. The harvest and the vintage go together: at the same time that the earth is reaped, and God's elect are gathered into his garner, "the angel that has power over fire, thrust in his sickle, and gathers the cluster of the vine of the earth, and casts it into the great wine-press of the wrath of God," Rev. xiv. So it is foretold, in reference to the beginning of the glorious times of the Christian church, that as "the hand of the Lord is known towards his servants, so shall his indignation be towards his enemies," Isa. lxvi. 14. So when that glorious morning shall appear, wherein "the sun of righteousness shall arise to the elect, with healing in his wings, the day shall burn as an oven to the wicked,

Mal. iv. 1—3. There is no time like it for the increase of guilt, and treasuring up wrath, and desperate hardening of the heart, if men stand it out; which is the most awful judgment and fruit of divine wrath, that can be inflicted on any mortal. So that a time of great grace, and the fruits of divine mercy, is evermore also a time of divine vengeance, on those that neglect and misimprove such a season.

The state of the present revival of religion has an awful aspect upon those that are advanced in years. The work has been chiefly amongst the young; and comparatively but few others have been made partakers of it. And indeed it has commonly been so, when God has begun any great work for the revival of his church; he has taken the young people, and has cast off the old and stiff-necked generation. There was a remarkable out-pouring of the Spirit of God on the children of Israel in the wilderness, but chiefly on the younger generation, "their littles ones, that they said should be a prey," the generation that entered into Canaan with Joshua. That generation seems to have been the most excellent that ever was in the church of Israel. There is no generation, of which there is so much good, and so little evil spoken in scripture, as might be shewn. In that generation, such as were under twenty years when they went out of Egypt, was that "kindness of youth," and "love of espousals," spoken of, Jer. ii. 2, 3. But the old generation were passed by; they remained obstinate and stiff-necked, were always murmuring, and would not be convinced by all God's wondrous works that they beheld.—God by his awful judgments executed in the wilderness, and the affliction which the people suffered there, convinced and humbled the younger generation, and fitted them for great mercy; as is evident by Deut. ii. 16. but he destroyed the old generation; "he swore in his wrath that they should not enter into his rest, and their carcasses fell in the wilderness." When it was a time of great mercy, and of God's Spirit on their children, it was remarkably a day of vengeance unto them; as appears by the 90th Psalm. Let the old generation in this land take warning from hence, and take heed that they do not refuse to be convinced by all God's wonders that he works before their eyes, and that they do not continue for ever objecting, murmuring, and cavilling against the work of God, lest, while he is bringing their children into a land flowing with milk and honey, he should swear in his wrath concerning them, that their carcasses shall fall in the wilderness.

So when God had a design of great mercy to the Jews, in bringing them out of the Babylonish captivity, and returning them to their own land, there was a blessed out-pouring of the Spirit upon them in Babylon, to bring them to deep

conviction and repentance, and to cry earnestly to God for mercy; which is often spoken of by the prophets. But it was not upon the *old* generation, that were carried captive. The captivity continued just long enough for that perverse generation to waste away and die in their captivity, at least those of them that were adult persons when carried captive. The heads of families were exceeding obstinate, and would not hearken to the earnest repeated warnings of the prophet Jeremiah; but he had greater success among the young people; as appears by Jer. vi. 10, 11. "To whom shall I speak and give warning, that they may hear? Behold, their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken: Behold, the word of the Lord is unto them a reproach; they have no delight in it. Therefore I am full of the fury of the Lord; I am weary with holding in: I will pour it out upon the children abroad, and upon the assembly of the young men together: For even the husband with the wife (i. e. the heads of families, and parents of these children,) shall be taken, the aged with him that is full of days." Blessed be God! there are some of the elder people that have been made partakers of this work. And those that are most awakened by these warnings of God's word, and the awful frowns of his providence, will be most likely to be made partakers hereafter. It infinitely concerns them to take heed to themselves, that they may be partakers of it; for how dreadful will it be to go to hell, after having spent so many years in doing nothing but treasuring up wrath!

But above all others does it concern us who are ministers to see to it that we have experience of the saving operations of the same spirit that is now poured out on the land. How sorrowful and melancholy is the case, when it is otherwise! For one to stand at the head of a congregation of God's people, as representing Christ and speaking in his stead; and to act the part of a shepherd and guide to a people in such a state of things, when many are under great awakenings, many are converted, and many of God's saints are filled with divine light, love, and joy: to undertake to instruct and lead them all under these various circumstances; to be put to it continually to play the hypocrite, and force the airs of a saint in preaching; and from time to time in private conversation, and particular dealing with souls, to undertake to judge of their circumstances: to try to talk with persons of experience, as if he knew how to converse with them, and had experience as well as they; to make others believe that he rejoices when others are converted; and to force a pleased and joyful countenance and manner of speech, when there is nothing in the heart: What sorrowful work is here! Oh how miserable must such a person feel! What a

wretched bondage and slavery is this! What pains, and how much art must such a minister use to conceal himself! And how weak are his hands! What infinite provocation of the most high God, and displeasure of his Lord and Master he incurs, by continuing a secret enemy to him in his heart, in such circumstances. I think there is a great deal of reason from the scripture to conclude, that no sort of men in the world will be so low in hell as ungodly ministers. Every thing spoken of in scripture, as that which aggravates guilt, and heightens divine wrath, meets in them. And what great disadvantages are unconverted ministers under, to oppose any irregularities, imprudences, or intemperate zeal, which they may see in those who are the children of God, when they are conscious to themselves that they have no zeal at all! If enthusiasm and wildness come in like a flood, what poor weak instruments are such ministers to withstand it! With what courage can they open their mouths, when they look inward, and consider how it is with them!

We who are ministers, not only have need of some true experience of the saving influence of the Spirit of God upon our heart, but we need a double portion at such a time as this. We need to be as full of light as a glass that is held out in the sun; and, with respect to love and zeal, we need to be like the angels, who are a flame of fire. The state of the times extremely requires a fulness of the divine Spirit in ministers, and we ought to give ourselves no rest till we have obtained it. And, in order to this, I should think ministers, above all persons, ought to be much in prayer and fasting, both in secret and one with another. It seems to me, that it would become the circumstances of the present day, if ministers in a neighbourhood would often meet together, and spend days in fasting and fervent prayer among themselves, earnestly seeking extraordinary supplies of divine grace from heaven. And how desirable that, on their occasional visits one to another, instead of spending away their time in sitting and smoking, in diverting, or worldly, unprofitable conversation—telling news, and making their remarks on this and the other trifling subject—they would spend their time in praying together, singing praises, and religious conference. How much do many of the common people shame many of us who are in the work of the ministry in these respects? Surely we do not behave ourselves so much like Christian ministers, and the disciples and ambassadors of Christ, as we ought to do. And, while we condemn zealous persons for censuring ministers at this day, it ought not to be without deep reflections upon, and great condemnation of ourselves; for indeed we do very much to provoke censoriousness, and lay a great temptation before others to the sin of judging.

And if we can prove that those who are guilty of it transgress the scripture rule, our indignation should be chiefly against ourselves.

Ministers, at this day in a special manner, should act as fellow-helpers in their great work. It should be seen that they are animated and engaged, that they exert themselves with one heart and soul, and with united strength, to promote the present glorious revival of religion; and to that end should often meet together, and act in concert. And if it were a common thing in the country, for ministers to join in public exercises, and second one another in their preaching, I believe it would be of great service. I mean that ministers, having consulted one another as to their subjects before they go to the house of God, should there (two or three of them) in short discourses earnestly enforce each other's warnings and counsels. Such appearance of united zeal in ministers would have a great tendency to awaken attention, and to impress and animate the hearers; as has been found by experience in some parts of the country.—Ministers should carefully avoid weakening one another's hands: and therefore every thing should be avoided, by which their interest with the people might be diminished, or their union with them broken. Therefore, if ministers have not forfeited their acceptance in that character in the visible church, by their doctrine or behaviour, their brethren in the ministry ought studiously to endeavour to heighten the esteem and affection of their people towards them, that they may have no temptation to repent their admitting other ministers to preach in their pulpits.

Two things exceeding needful in ministers, as they would do any great matters to advance the kingdom of Christ, are *zeal* and *resolution*. Their influence and power, to bring to pass great effects, is greater than can well be imagined. A man of but an ordinary capacity will do more with them, than one of ten times the parts and learning without them; more may be done with them in a few days, or at least weeks, than can be done without them in many years. Those who are possessed of these qualities commonly carry the day, in almost all affairs. Most of the great things that have been done in the world, the great revolutions that have been accomplished in the kingdoms and empires of the earth have been chiefly owing to them. The very appearance of a thoroughly engaged spirit, together with a fearless courage and unyielding resolution, in any person that has undertaken the managing of any affair amongst mankind, goes a great way towards accomplishing the effect aimed at. It is evident that the appearance of these in Alexander did three times as much towards his conquering the world, as all the blows

that he struck. And how much were the great things that Oliver Cromwell did, owing to these? And the great things that Mr. Whitfield has done, every where, as he has run through the British dominions, (so far as they are owing to means,) are very much owing to the appearance of these things which he is eminently possessed of. When the people see these in a person to a great degree, it awes them, and has a commanding influence upon their minds. It seems to them that they must yield; they naturally fall before them, without standing to contest or dispute the matter; they are conquered as it were by surprise. But while we are cold and heartless, and only go on in a dull manner, in an old formal round, we shall never do any great matters. Our attempts, with the appearance of such coldness and irresolution, will not so much as make persons think of yielding. They will hardly be sufficient to put it into their minds; and if it be put into their minds, the appearance of such indifference and cowardice does as it were call for and provoke opposition.—Our misery is want of zeal and courage; for not only through want of them does all fail that we seem to attempt, but it prevents our *attempting* any thing very remarkable for the kingdom of Christ. Hence oftentimes, when any thing very considerable is proposed to be done for the advancement of religion or the public good, many difficulties are in the way, and a great many objections are started, and it may be it is put off from one to another; but nobody does any thing. And after this manner good designs or proposals have often failed, and have sunk as soon as proposed. Whereas, if we had but Mr. Whitfield's zeal and courage, what could not we do, with such a blessing as we might expect?

Zeal and courage will do much in persons of but an ordinary capacity; but especially would they do great things, if joined with great abilities. If some great men who have appeared in our nation, had been as eminent in divinity as they were in philosophy, and had engaged in the Christian cause with as much zeal and fervour as some others have done, and with a proportionable blessing of heaven, they would have conquered all Christendom, and turned the world upside down. We have many ministers in the land that do not want abilities, they are persons of bright parts and learning; they should consider how much is expected and will be required of them by their Lord and Master, how much they might do for Christ, and what great honour and glorious a reward they might receive, if they had in their hearts an heavenly warmth, and divine heat proportionable to their light.

With respect to candidates for the ministry, I will not

undertake particularly to determine what kind of examination or trial they should pass under, in order to their admission to that sacred work. But I think this is evident from the scripture, that another sort of trial with regard to their virtue and piety is requisite, than is required in order to persons being admitted into the visible church. The apostle directs, "that hands be laid suddenly on no man;" but that they should "first be tried," before they are admitted to the work of the ministry; but it is evident that persons were suddenly admitted by baptism into the visible church, on profession of their faith in Christ, without such caution or strictness in their probation. And it seems to me, those would act very unadvisedly, that should enter on that great and sacred work, before they had comfortable satisfaction concerning themselves, that they have had a saving work of God on their souls.

And though it may be thought that I go out of my proper sphere, to intermeddle in the affairs of the colleges; yet I will take the liberty of an Englishman that speaks his mind freely concerning public affairs, and the liberty of a minister of Christ, (who doubtless may speak his mind as freely about things that concern the kingdom of his Lord and Master,) to give my opinion, in some things, with respect to those societies; the original and main design of which is to train up persons, and fit them for the work of the ministry. And I would say in general, that it appears to me care should be taken, some way or other, that those societies should be so regulated, that they should, in fact, be nurseries of piety. Otherwise they are fundamentally ruined and undone as to their main design and most essential end. They ought to be so constituted, that vice and idleness should have no living there. They are intolerable in societies, whose main design is to train up youth in Christian knowledge and eminent piety, to fit them to be pastors of the flock of the blessed Jesus. I have heretofore had some acquaintance with the affairs of a college, and experience of what belonged to its tuition and government; and I cannot but think that it is practicable enough, so to constitute such societies, that there should be no residing there, without being virtuous, serious, and diligent. It seems to me a reproach to the land, that ever it should be so with our colleges, that, instead of being places of the greatest advantages for true piety, one cannot send a child thither without great danger of his being infected as to his morals. It is perfectly intolerable; and any thing should be done, rather than it should be so. If we pretend to have any colleges at all, under any notion of training up youth for the ministry, there should be some way found out, that should certainly prevent its being thus. To have societies for bringing

persons up to be ambassadors of Jesus Christ, and to lead souls to heaven, and to have them places of so much infection, is the greatest nonsense and absurdity imaginable.

And as thorough and effectual care should be taken that vice and idleness be not tolerated in these societies, so certainly their design requires that extraordinary means should be used in them for training up the students in vital religion, and experimental and practical godliness; so that they should be holy societies, the very place should be as it were sacred. They should be, in the midst of the land, fountains of piety and holiness. There is a great deal of pains taken to teach the scholars human learning; there ought to be as much and more care thoroughly to educate them in religion, and lead them to true and eminent holiness. If the main design of these nurseries is to bring up persons to teach Christ, then it is of the greatest importance that there should be care and pains taken to bring those who are there educated, to the knowledge of Christ. It has been common in our public prayers, to call these societies *the Schools of the Prophets;* and, if they are schools to train up young men to be *prophets*, certainly there ought to be extraordinary care taken to train them up to be *Christians.*—And I cannot see why it is not on all accounts fit and convenient for the governors and instructors of the colleges particularly, singly and frequently, to converse with the students about the state of their souls; as is the practice of the Rev. Dr. Doddridge, one of the most noted of the present dissenting ministers in England, who keeps an academy at Northampton, as he himself informs the Rev. Mr. Wadsworth, of Hartford in Connecticut, in a letter dated at Northampton, March 6, 1741. The original of which letter I have seen, and have by me an extract of it, sent me by Mr. Wadsworth; which is as follows:

"Through the divine goodness, I have every year the pleasure to see some plants taken out of my nursery, and set in neighbouring congregations; where they generally settle with an unanimous consent, and that to a very remarkable degree, in some very large and once divided congregations. A circumstance in which I own and adore the hand of a wise and gracious God; and cannot but look upon it as a token for good. I have at present a greater proportion of pious and ingenious youth under my care than I ever before had: so that I hope the church may reasonably expect some considerable relief from hence, if God spares their lives a few years, and continue to them those gracious assistances which he has hitherto mercifully imparted.—I will not, sir, trouble you at present with a large account of my method of academical education: only would observe, that I think it of vast importance to instruct them carefully in the scriptures; and not only

endeavour to establish them in the great truths of Christianity, but to labour to promote their practical influence on their hearts. For which purpose, I frequently converse with each of them alone, and conclude the conversation with prayer. This does indeed take up a great deal of time; but, I bless God, it is amply repaid in the pleasure I have in seeing my labour is not in vain in the Lord."

There are some who are not ministers, nor are concerned immediately in those things that appertain to their office, or in the education of persons for it, who are under great advantages to promote such a glorious work as this. Some lay-men, though it be not their business publicly to exhort and teach, are in some respects under greater advantage to encourage and forward this work than ministers; as particularly great men, or those who are high in honour and influence. How much might such do to encourage religion, and open the way for it to have free course, and bear down opposition, if they were but inclined! There is commonly a certain unhappy shyness in great men with respect to religion, as though they were ashamed of it, or at least ashamed to do much at it; whereby they dishonour and doubtless greatly provoke the King of kings, and very much wound religion among the common people. They are careful of their honour, and seem to be afraid of appearing openly forward and zealous in religion, as though it were what would debase their character, and expose them to contempt.—But in this day of bringing up the ark, they ought to be like David, that great king of Israel, who *made himself vile* before the ark; and as he was the highest in honour and dignity among God's people, so he thought it became him to appear foremost in the zeal and activity manifested on that occasion; thereby animating and encouraging the whole congregation to praise the Lord, and rejoice before him with all their might. And though it diminished him in the eyes of scoffing Michal, yet it did not at all abate the honour and esteem of the congregation of Israel, but advanced it; as appears by 2 Sam. vi. 22.

Rich men have a talent in their hands, in the disposal and improvement of which they might very much promote such a work as this, if they were so disposed. They are far beyond others in advantages to do good, and lay up for themselves treasures in heaven. What a thousand pities it is that, for want of a heart, they commonly have no share at all there, but heaven is peopled mostly with the poor of this world! One would think that our rich men who call themselves Christians, might devise some notable things to do with their money, to advance the kingdom of their professed Redeemer, and the prosperity of the souls of men, at this time of such extraordinary advantage for it. It seems to me, that in this

age most of us have but very narrow, penurious notions of Christianity, as it respects our use and disposal of our temporal goods. The primitive Christians had not such notions; they were trained up by the apostles in another way.—God has greatly distinguished some of the inhabitants of New England from others, in the abundance he has given them of the good things of this life. If they could now be persuaded to lay out some considerable part of that which God has given them for his honour, and lay it up in heaven, instead of spending it for their own honour, or laying it up for their posterity, they would not repent of it afterwards. How liberally did the heads of the tribes contribute of their wealth at the setting up the tabernacle, though it was in a barren wilderness? These are the days of erecting the tabernacle of God amongst us. We have a particular account how the goldsmiths and the merchants helped to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, Neh. iii. 32. The days are coming, and I believe not very far off, when the sons of Zion "shall come from far, bringing their silver and their gold with them, unto the name of the Lord their God, and to the Holy One of Israel;" when the merchants of the earth shall trade for Christ, more than for themselves, and "their merchandise and hire shall be holiness to the Lord, and shall not be treasured or laid up for posterity, but shall be for them that dwell before the Lord, to eat sufficiently, and for durable clothing; when the ships of Tarshish shall bring *the wealth of the distant parts of the earth* to the place of God's sanctuary, and to make the place of his feet glorious; and the abundance of the sea shall be converted to the use of God's church, and she shall suck the milk of the Gentiles, and suck the breasts of kings." The days are coming, when the great and rich men of the world "shall bring their honour and glory into the church," and shall, as it were, strip themselves in order to spread their garments under Christ's feet, as he enters triumphantly into Jerusalem; and when those that will not do so shall have no glory, and their silver and gold shall be cankered, and their garments moth-eaten. For the saints shall then inherit the earth, and they shall reign on it; and those that honour God he will honour, and those that despise him shall be lightly esteemed.—If some of our rich men would give one quarter of their estates to promote this work, they would act a little as if they were designed for the kingdom of heaven, and as rich men will act by and by who shall be partakers of the spiritual wealth and glories of that kingdom.

Great things might be done for the advancement of the kingdom of Christ at this day by those who have ability, by establishing *funds* for the support and propagation of religion; by supporting some who are eminently qualified with gifts and grace in *preaching the gospel* in certain parts of the country,

which are more destitute of the means of grace; by searching out children of promising abilities and their hearts full of love to Christ, but of poor families, (as doubtless there are such now in the land,) and *bringing them up for the ministry;* and by *distributing books*, that are remarkably fitted to promote vital religion, and have a great tendency to advance this work.—Or if they would only bear the trouble and expense of sending such books into various parts of the land to be *sold*, it might be an occasion that ten times so many of those books should be bought, as otherwise would be—by establishing and supporting *schools* in poor towns and villages; which might be done on such a foundation, as not only to bring up children in common learning, but also might very much tend to their conviction and conversion, and being trained up in vital piety. Doubtless something might be done this way in old towns and more populous places, that might have a great tendency to the flourishing of religion in the rising generation.

SECT. III.

Of some particulars that concern all in general.

And here, the first thing I shall mention is *fasting and prayer*. It seems to me, that the circumstances of the present work loudly call upon God's people to abound in this; whether they consider their own *experience*, or the riches of God's *grace*. God has lately given them an experience of the worth of his presence, and of the blessed fruits of the effusions of his Spirit, to excite them to pray for the continuance, increase, and greater extent of such blessings; and they have great encouragement to pray for the out-pouring of his Spirit, and the carrying on of this work, by the great manifestations he has lately made of the freeness and riches of his grace. There is much in what we have seen of the glorious works of God's power and grace, to put us in mind of the yet greater things of this nature that he has spoken of in his word; and to excite our longings, and our hopes of their approach. Beside, we should consider the great opposition that Satan makes against this work, the many difficulties with which it is clogged, and the distressing circumstances that some parts of God's church in this land are under at this day, on one account and another.

So is God's will, through his wonderful grace, that the prayers of his saints should be one great and principal means of carrying on the designs of Christ's kingdom in the world. When God has something very great to accomplish for his church, it is his will that there should precede it the extraordi-

nary prayers of his people; as is manifest by Ezek. xxxvi. 37. "I will yet, for this, be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them:" (see the context.) And it is revealed that, when God is about to accomplish great things for his church, he will begin by remarkably pouring out the spirit of grace and supplication, Zech. xii. 10. If we are not to expect that the devil should go out of a particular person, under a bodily possession, without extraordinary prayer, *or prayer and fasting;* how much less should we expect to have him cast out of the land, and the world, without it?

I am sensible that somewhat considerable has been done in duties of this nature in some places, but I do not think so much as God in the present dispensations of his providence calls for. I should think the people of God in this land, at such a time as this is, would be in the way of their duty while doing three times as much at fasting and prayer as they do; not only, nor principally, for the pouring out of the Spirit on those places to which they belong; but that God would appear for his church, and in mercy to miserable men, carry on his work in the land, and in the world, and fulfil the things he has spoken of in his word, that his church has been so long wishing and hoping and waiting for. "They that make mention of the Lord," at this day, ought not to "keep silence," and should "give God no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth;" agreeable to Isa. lxii. 6, 7. Before the first great outpouring of the Spirit of God on the Christian church, which began at Jerusalem, the disciples gave themselves to incessant prayer, Acts i. 13, 14. There is a time spoken of, wherein God will remarkably and wonderfully appear for the deliverance of his church from all her enemies, and when he will "avenge his own Elect:" And Christ reveals that this will be in answer to their incessant prayers, or "crying day and night," Luke xviii. 7. In Israel, the "day of atonement," which was their great day of fasting and prayer, preceded and made way for the glorious and joyful "feast of tabernacles." When Christ is mystically born into the world, to rule over all nations, it is represented in the 12th chap. of Rev. as being in consequence of the church's "crying, and travailing in birth, and being pained to be delivered." One thing here intended doubtless is, her crying and agonizing in prayer.

God seems at this very time to be waiting for this from us. When he is about to bestow some great blessing on his church, it is often his manner, in the first place, so to order things in his providence, as to shew his church their great need of it, and to bring them into distress for want of it, and so put them upon crying earnestly to him for it. Let us consider God's present dispensations towards his church in this land: a glorious work of his grace has been begun and carried on; and

he has of late suffered innumerable difficulties to arise, that in a great measure clog and hinder it, and bring many of God's dear children into great distress. And yet he does not wholly forsake the work of his hand; there are remarkable tokens of his presence still to be seen, here and there; as though he was not forward to forsake us, and (if I may so say) as though he had a mind to carry on his work, but only was waiting for something that he expected in us, as requisite in order to it. And we have a great deal of reason to think, that one thing at least is, that we should further acknowledge the greatness and necessity of such a mercy, and our dependence on God for it, in earnest and importunate prayers to him. And by the many errors that have been run into, by the wounds we have thereby given ourselves and the cause that we would promote, and the mischief and confusion we have thereby made, God has hitherto been remarkably shewing us our great and universal dependence on him, and exceeding need of help and grace; which should engage our cries to him for it.

There is no way that Christians in a private capacity can do so much to promote the work of God, and advance the kingdom of Christ, as by prayer. By this even women, children and servants, may have a public influence. Let persons in other respects be never so weak, and never so mean, and under never so poor advantages to do much for Christ and the souls of men; yet, if they have much of the spirit of grace and supplication, in this way, they may have power with him who is infinite in power, and has the government of the whole world. A poor man in his cottage may have a blessed influence all over the world. God is, if I may so say, at the command of the prayer of faith; and in this respect is, as it were, under the power of his people; "as princes, they have power with God, and prevail." Though they may be private persons, their prayers are put up in the name of a Mediator who is a public person, being the head of the whole church, and the Lord of the universe. If they have a great sense of the importance of eternal things, and a concern for the precious souls of men, they need not regret it that they are not preachers; they may go in their earnestness and agonies of soul, and pour out their souls before one who is able to do all things. Before him they may speak as freely as ministers; they have a great high priest, through whom they may come boldly at all times, and may vent themselves before a prayer-hearing Father without restraint.

If the people of God at this day, instead of spending time in fruitless disputing, in talking about opposers, judging them, and animadverting upon the unreasonableness of their talk and behaviour, and its inconsistence with true experience, would be more silent in this way, and open their mouths

much more before God, and spend more time in fasting and prayer, they would be more in the way of a blessing. And if some Christians who have been complaining of their ministers, and struggling in vain to deliver themselves from the difficulties complained of under their ministry, had said and acted less before men, and had applied themselves with all their might to cry to God for their ministers, had as it were risen and stormed heaven with their humble, fervent, and incessant prayers for them, they would have been much more in the way of success.

God in his providence appearing in the present state of things, does especially call on his people in New England to be very much in praying to him for the pouring out of the Spirit upon *ministers* in the land. For though it is not for us to determine concerning particular ministers, how much they have of the Spirit of God; yet in the general it is apparent that there is at this day need of very great degrees of the presence of God with the ministry in New-England, much greater degrees of it than have hitherto been granted; they need it for themselves, and the church of God stands in extreme need of it.

On days of fasting and prayer, wherein the whole congregation is concerned, if the day, besides what is spent in our families, was not wholly spent in the meeting-house, but part of it in particular praying companies or societies, it would have a tendency to animate and engage devotion, more than if the whole day were spent in public, where the people are no way active themselves in the worship, any otherwise than as they join with the minister. The inhabitants of many of our towns are now divided into particular praying societies; most of the people, young and old, have voluntarily associated themselves in distinct companies, for mutual assistance in social worship, in private houses. What I intend therefore is, that days of prayer should be spent partly in these distinct praying companies. Such a method as *this*, has been several times proved, viz. in the forenoon, after the duties of the family and closet, as early as it might be, all the people of the congregation have gathered in their particular religious societies; companies of men by themselves, and companies of women by themselves; young men by themselves, and young women by themselves; and companies of children in all parts of the town by themselves, as many as were capable of social religious exercises; the boys by themselves, and the girls by themselves: and about the middle of the day, at an appointed hour, all have met together in the house of God, to offer up public prayers, and to hear a sermon suitable to the occasion; and then, they have retired from the house of God again into their

private societies, and spent the remaining part of the day in praying together there, excepting so much as was requisite for the duties of the family and closet in their own houses.—And it has been found to be of great benefit, to assist and engage the minds of the people in the duties of the day.

I have often thought it would be very desirable, and very likely to be followed with a great blessing, if there could be some contrivance for an agreement of all God's people in America, who are well-affected to this work, to keep a day of fasting and prayer; wherein we should all unite on the same day, in humbling ourselves before God for our past long-continued lukewarmness and unprofitableness; not omitting humiliation for the errors that so many of God's people—though zealously affected towards this work—through their infirmity, and remaining blindness and corruption, have run into: and together with thanksgivings to God for so glorious and wonderful a display of his power and grace in the late outpourings of his Spirit, to address the Father of mercies, with prayers and supplications, and earnest cries, that he would guide and direct his own people, and that he would continue and still carry on this work, and more abundantly and extensively pour out his Spirit, and particularly upon ministers; and that he would bow the heavens and come down, and erect his glorious kingdom through the earth.—Some perhaps may think that its being all on the same day, is a circumstance of no great consequence; but I cannot be of that mind. Such a circumstance makes the union and agreement of God's people in his worship the more visible, and puts the greater honour upon God, and would have a great tendency to assist and enliven the devotions of Christians. It seems to me, it would mightily encourage and animate God's saints in humbly and earnestly seeking to God for such blessings which concern them all; and that it would be much for the rejoicing of all, to think, that at the same time such multitudes of God's dear children, far and near, were sending up their cries to the same common Father, for the same mercies. Christ speaks of agreement in asking, as to what contributes to the prevalence of the prayers of his people, Matt. xviii. 19. "Again I say unto you, that if any two of you shall agree on earth, as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven." If the agreement, or united purpose and appointment, of but two of God's children, would contribute much to the prevalence of their prayers; how much more the agreement of so many thousands? Christ delights greatly in the union of his people, as appears by his prayer in the 17th of John: and especially is the appearance of their union in worship lovely and attractive unto him.

I doubt not but such a thing as I have now mentioned is practicable without a great deal of trouble. Some considerable number of ministers might meet together, and draw up the proposal, wherein a certain day should be fixed at a sufficient distance, endeavouring therein to avoid any other public day that might interfere with the design in any of the provinces, and the business of the day should be particularly mentioned. These proposals should be published, and sent abroad into all parts, with a desire, that as many ministers as are disposed to fall in with them, would propose the matter to their congregations, and, having taken their consent, would subscribe their names, together with the places of which they are ministers, and send back the proposals thus subscribed to the printer. The hands of many ministers might be to one paper. The printer having received the papers, thus subscribed, from all the provinces, might print the proposals again, with all the names; thus they might be sent abroad again with the names, that God's people might know who are united with them in the affair. One of the ministers of Boston might be desired to have the oversight of printing and dispersing the proposals. In such a way, perhaps, might be fulfilled, in some measure, such a general mourning and supplication of God's people as is spoken of, Zech. xii. at the latter end, with which the church's glorious day is to be introduced.—And such a day might be something like the "day of atonement" in Israel, before the joyful "feast of tabernacles."

One thing more I would mention concerning fasting and prayer, wherein I think there has been a neglect in ministers; and that is, That although they recommend and much insist on the duty of secret prayer, in their preaching; so little is said about secret fasting. It is a duty recommended by our Saviour to his followers, just in like manner as secret prayer is; as may be seen by comparing Matt. vi. 5, 6. with ver. 16—18. Though I do not suppose that secret fasting is to be practised in a stated manner, and steady course, like secret prayer; yet it seems to me a duty that all professing Christians should practise, and frequently practise. There are many occasions, of both a spiritual and temporal nature, that properly require it; and there are many particular mercies we desire for ourselves or friends, that it would be proper in this manner to seek of God.

Another thing I would also mention, wherein it appears to me that there has been an omission, with respect to the external worship of God. There has been of late a great increase of preaching the word, of social prayer, and of singing praises. These external duties of religion are attended much more frequently than they used to be; yet I cannot

understand that there is any increase of the administration of the Lord's Supper, or that God's people do any more frequently commemorate the dying love of their Redeemer, in this sacred memorial of it, than they used to do. I do not see why an increase of love to Christ should not dispose Christians as much to increase in this as in those other duties; or why it is not as proper that Christ's disciples should abound in this duty, in this joyful season, which is spiritually supper-time, a feast-day with God's saints, wherein Christ is so abundantly manifesting his dying love to souls, and is dealing forth so liberally of the precious fruits of his death. It seems plain by the scripture, that the primitive Christians were wont to celebrate this memorial of the sufferings of their dear Redeemer every Lord's day; and so I believe it will be again in the church of Christ, in days that are approaching. And whether we attend this holy and sweet ordinance so often now, or no; yet I cannot but think it would become us, at such a time as this, to attend it much oftener than is commonly done in the land.

But another thing I would mention, which it is of much greater importance that we should attend to, and that is the duty incumbent upon God's people at this day, to take heed, that while they abound in external duties of devotion, such as praying, hearing, singing, and attending religious meetings, there be a proportionable care to abound in moral duties, such as acts of righteousness, truth, meekness, forgiveness, and love towards our neighbour; which are of much greater importance in the sight of God than all the externals of his worship. Our Saviour was particularly careful that men should be well aware of this, Matt. ix. 13. "But go ye, and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice." And chap. xii. 7. "But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless."

The internal acts and principles of the worship of God, or the worship of the heart, in love and fear, trust in God, and resignation to him, &c. are the most essential and important of all duties of religion whatsoever; for therein consists the essence of all religion. But of this inward religion there are two sorts of external manifestations or expressions. To one sort belong outward acts of worship, such as meeting in religious assemblies, attending sacraments and other outward institutions, honouring God with gestures, such as bowing, or kneeling before him, or with words, in speaking honourably of him in prayer, praise, or religious conference. To the other sort belong expressions of our love to God, by obeying his moral commands, self-denial, righteousness, meekness, and Christian love, in our behaviour among men. The latter are

of vastly the greatest importance in the Christian life; God makes little account of the former, in comparison of them; they are abundantly more insisted on, by the prophets of the Old Testament, and Christ and his apostles in the New. When these two kinds of duties are spoken of together, the latter are evermore greatly preferred; as in Isa. i. 12—18. and Amos v. 21, &c. and Mic. vi. 7, 8. and Isa. lviii. 5, 6, 7. and Zech. vii. ten first verses, and Jer. ii. seven first verses, and Matt. xv. 3, &c. Often, when the times were very corrupt in Israel, the people abounded in the former kind of duties, but were at such times always notoriously deficient in the latter; as the prophets complain, Isa. lviii. four first verses, Jer. vi. 13. compared with ver. 20. Hypocrites and self-righteous persons do much more commonly abound in the former kind of duties than the latter; as Christ remarks of the Pharisees, Matt. xxiii. 14, 25—34. When the scripture directs us to "shew our faith by our works," it is principally the latter sort are intended; as appears by Jam. ii. from the eighth verse to the end, and 1 John, ii. 3, 7—11. And we are to be judged, at the last day, especially by these latter sort of works; as is evident by the account we have of the day of judgment, in the 25th of Matt. External acts of worship, in words and gestures, and outward forms, are of little use, but as signs of something else, or as they are a profession of inward worship. They are not so properly shewing our religion by our deeds; for they are only showing our religion by words, or an outward profession. But he that shews religion in the other sort of duties, shews it in something more than a profession of words, he shews it in deeds. And though deeds may be hypocritical, as well as words; yet in themselves they are of greater importance, for they are much more profitable to ourselves and our neighbour. We cannot express our love to God by doing any thing that is profitable to him; God would therefore have us do it in those things that are profitable to our neighbours, whom he has constituted his receivers. Our goodness extends not to God, but to our fellow-christians. The latter sort of duties put greater honour upon God, because there is greater self-denial in them. The external acts of worship, consisting in bodily gestures, words and sounds, are the cheapest part of religion, and least contrary to our lusts. The difficulty of thorough, external religion, does not lie in them. Let wicked men enjoy their covetousness, their pride, their malice, envy and revenge, their sensuality and voluptuousness, in their behaviour amongst men, and they will be willing to compound the matter with God, and submit to what forms of worship you please, and as many as you please. This was manifest in the Jews in the days of the prophets, the Pharisees in Christ's time, and the Papists and Mahometans at this day.

At a time when there is an apparent approach of any glorious revival of God's church, he especially calls his professing people to the practice of moral duties, Isa. lvi. 1. "Thus saith the Lord, Keep ye judgment, and do justice: for my salvation is near to come, and my righteousness to be revealed." So when John preached that the "kingdom of heaven was at hand," and cried to the people, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight," (Luke iii. 4.) the people asked him, "What they should do?" He answers, "He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise." "The publicans said, What shall we do?" He answers, "Exact no more than that which is appointed you." "And the soldiers asked him, What shall we do?" He replies, "Do violence to no man; neither accuse any falsely: and be content with your wages," ver. 10—14.

God's people, at such a time as this, ought especially to abound in deeds of charity, or alms-giving. We generally, in these days, seem to fall far below the true spirit and practice of Christianity with regard to this duty, and seem to have but little notion of it, so far as I can understand the New Testament.—At a time when God is so liberal of spiritual things, we ought not to be strait-handed towards him, and sparing of our temporal things. So for as I can judge by the scripture, there is no external duty whatsoever, by which persons will be so much in the way, not only of receiving temporal benefits, but also spiritual blessing, the influences of God's Holy Spirit in the heart, in divine discoveries, and spiritual consolations. I think it would be unreasonable to understand those promises, made to this duty, in the 58th chap. of Isaiah, in a sense exclusive of spiritual discoveries and comforts; Isa. lviii. 7, &c. —"Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him, and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh? Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thy health shall spring forth speedily; and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the Lord shall be thy reward. Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am; if thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity: And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon-day. And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not." So that giving to the poor is the way to receive spiritual blessings, is manifest by Psalm cxii. 4, &c. "Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness: he is gracious, and full of

compassion, and righteous. A good man sheweth favour, and lendeth; he will guide his affairs with discretion. Surely he shall not be moved for ever; the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance. He shall not be afraid of evil tidings; his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord. His heart is established, he shall not be afraid, until he see his desire upon his enemies. He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor; his horn shall be exalted with honour." That this is one likely means to obtain assurance, is evident by 1 John iii. 18, 19. "My little children let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed, and in truth. And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him."

We have a remarkable instance in Abraham, of God rewarding deeds of charity with sweet discoveries of himself. He had been remarkably charitable to his brother Lot, and the people redeemed out of captivity with him, by exposing his life to rescue them. He had re-taken not only the persons, but all the spoil that had been taken by Chedorlaomer and the confederate kings. The king of Sodom offered him, that, if he would give him the persons, he might take the goods to himself; but Abraham refused to take any thing, even so much as a thread or shoe-latchet, but returned all.—He might have greatly enriched himself if he had taken the spoil to himself, for it was the spoil of five wealthy kings and their kingdoms, yet he did not covet it. The king and people of Sodom were now become objects of charity, having been stript of all by their enemies; therefore Abraham generously bestowed all upon them, as we have an account in Gen. xiv. and four last verses. He was soon rewarded for it, by a blessed discovery that God made of himself to him; as in the next words: "After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abraham in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abraham: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." "I am thy shield, to defend thee in battle, as I have now done: and though thou hast charitably refused to take any reward for exposing thy life to rescue this people, yet fear not, thou shalt not be a loser, thou shalt have a reward; I am thy exceeding great reward."

When Christ was upon earth, he was poor, and an object of charity; and, during the time of his public ministry he was supported by the charity of some of his followers, and particularly certain women, of whom we read, Luke viii. 2, 3. And these women were rewarded, by being peculiarly favoured with gracious manifestations which Christ made of himself to them. He discovered himself first to them after his resurrection, before the twelve disciples: they first saw a vision of glorious angels, who spake comfortably to them; and then Christ himself appeared to them, and spake peace to

them, saying, "All hail, be not afraid; and they were admitted to come and hold him by the feet, and worship him," Matt. xxviii. And though we cannot be charitable in *this way* to Christ, who in his exalted state is infinitely above the need of our charity; yet we may be charitable to him even now, as well as they then. For though Christ is not here, yet he has left others in his room, to be his receivers; and they are the poor. Christ is yet poor in his members; and he that gives to them, lends to the Lord: and Christ tells us, that he shall look on what is done to them, as done to him.

Rebekah, in her marriage with Isaac, was undoubtedly a remarkable type of the church, in her espousals to the Lord Jesus; she obtained her husband in doing deeds of charity; agreeable to the prayer of Abraham's servant, who desired that this might be the thing to distinguish the virgin who was to be Isaac's wife. So Cornelius was brought to the knowledge of Christ in this way. "He was a devout man, and one that feared God, with all his house; which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway. And an angel appeared to him, and said to him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God; and now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter," &c. Acts x. at the beginning. And we have an account in the following parts of the chapter, how God, by Peter's preaching, revealed Christ to Cornelius and his family, and of the Holy Ghost descending upon them, and filling their hearts with joy and their mouths with praises.

Some may possibly object, That for persons to do deeds of charity, in hope of obtaining spiritual blessings and comforts in this way, would seem to shew a self-righteous spirit, as though they would offer something to God to purchase these favours. But, if this be a good objection, it may be made against every duty whatsoever. All external duties of the first table will be excluded by it, as well as those of the second. First-table duties have as direct a tendency to raise self-righteous persons' expectations of receiving something from God, on account of them, as second-table duties; and on some accounts more, for those duties are more immediately offered *to God*, and therefore persons are more ready to expect something *from God* for them. But no duty is to be neglected for fear of making a righteousness of it. And I have always observed, that those professors who are most partial in their duty—exact and abundant in external duties of the first table, and slack as to those of the second—are the most self-righteous.

If God's people in this land were once brought to abound in such deeds of love, as much as in praying, hearing, singing, and religious meetings and conference, it would be a most

blessed omen. Nothing would have a greater tendency to bring the God of love down from heaven to earth: so amiable would be the sight in the eyes of our loving and exalted Redeemer, that it would soon as it were fetch him down from his throne in heaven, to set up his tabernacle with men on the earth, and dwell with them. I do not remember ever to have read of any remarkable outpouring of the Spirit, that continued any long time, but what was attended with an abounding in this duty. We know it was so with that great effusion of the Spirit which began at Jerusalem in the apostles' days. And so it was in the late remarkable revival of religion in Saxony, which began by the labours of the famous professor Franck, and has now been carried on for above thirty years, and has spread its happy influences into many parts of the world; it was begun, and has been carried on, by a wonderful practice in this duty. And the remarkable blessing that God has given Mr. Whitfield, and the great success with which he has crowned him, may well be thought to be very much owing to his laying out himself so abundantly in charitable designs. And it is foretold, that God's people shall abound in this duty at the time of the great outpouring of the Spirit that shall be in the latter days, Isa. xxxii. 5, 8. "The vile person shall no more be called liberal, nor the churl said to be bountiful—But the liberal deviseth liberal things, and by liberal things shall he stand."

To promote a reformation, with respect to all sorts of duties among a professing people, one proper means, and that which is recommended by frequent scripture-examples, is their solemn, public renewing of their covenant with God. —And doubtless it would greatly tend to promote this work in the land, if the congregations of God's people could generally be brought to this. Suppose a draught of a covenant be made by their ministers, wherein there should be an express mention of those particular duties that the people of the respective congregations have been observed to be most prone to neglect, those particular sins into which they have heretofore especially fallen, or of which it may be apprehended they are especially in danger, whereby they may prevent or resist the motions of God's Spirit. Suppose the matter be fully proposed and explained to the people, and, after sufficient opportunity for consideration, they be led, all that are capable of understanding, particularly to subscribe the covenant. Suppose also all appear together on a day of prayer and fasting, publicly to own it before God in his house, as their vow to the Lord; hereby congregations of Christians would do what would be beautiful in itself, what would put honour upon God, and be very profitable to themselves. Such a thing was attended with a very wonderful blessing in Scotland, and fol-

lowed with a great increase of the blessed tokens of the presence of God, and remarkable outpourings of his Spirit; as the author of the *Fulfilling of the Scripture* informs, p. 186, 5th edition.—A people must be taken when they are in a good mood, when considerable religious impressions prevail among them; otherwise innumerable will be their objections and cavils against it.

One thing more I would mention, which, if God should still carry on this work, would tend much to promote it; and that is, That a history should be published once a month, or once a fortnight, of its progress, by one of the ministers of Boston, who are near the press, and are most conveniently situated to receive accounts from all parts. It has been found by experience, that the tidings of remarkable effects of the power and grace of God in any place, tend greatly to awaken and engage the minds of persons in other places. It is a great pity, therefore, but that some means should be used for the most speedy, most extensive, and certain information of such things; that the country be not left to the slow, partial, and doubtful information, and false representations of common report.

Thus I have (I hope by the help of God) finished what I proposed. I have taken the more pains in it, because it appears to me that now God is giving us the most happy season to attempt an universal reformation that ever was given in New England. And it is a thousand pities, that we should fail of that which would be so glorious, for want of being sensible of our opportunity of being aware of those things that tend to hinder it, of taking improper courses to obtain it, or of not being sensible in what way God expects we should seek it. If it should please God to bless any means for convincing the country of his hand in this work, for bringing them fully and freely to acknowledge his glorious power and grace in it; and for bringing them to engage with one heart and soul, and by due methods, to endeavour to promote it, it would be a dispensation of divine providence that would have a most glorious aspect, happily signifying the approach of great and glorious things to the church of God, and justly causing us to hope that Christ would speedily come to set up his kingdom of light, holiness, peace and joy on earth, as is foretold in his word. *Amen;* even so come, Lord Jesus!

AN

HUMBLE INQUIRY

INTO THE

RULES OF THE WORD OF GOD,

CONCERNING

THE QUALIFICATIONS

REQUISITE TO A

COMPLETE STANDING AND FULL COMMUNION

IN THE

VISIBLE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

Behold now I have opened my mouth:—My words shall be of the uprightness of my heart.——Job xxxiii. 2, 3.

Confitebatur [*Lutherus*] dolorem suum, quod ab ipsis reflorescentis Evangelii Primordiis, quosvis absque Discrimine ad Cœnam Dominicam admisisset, quodque Disciplinam, Fratrum Disciplinæ similem, apud suos non constituisset.—Quia objiciebatur, Fratres non habere Ecclesiam apertam ;—Responsum fuit, Sancta dare non Sanctis prohibuisse Christum :—Errorem [in *Papatu*] corrigi non posse *aliter quam ut certa Probatione, nec illa subitanea, Cordium Arcana revelunter*, Novitiique diu et caute tum informentur, tum explorentur.

Ratio Discipl. Fratr. Bohem.

THE

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

My appearing in this public manner on that side of the question, which is defended in the following sheets, will probably be surprising to many; as it is well known, that Mr. Stoddard, so great and eminent a divine, and my venerable predecessor in the pastoral office over the church in Northampton, as well as my own grandfather, publicly and strenuously appeared in opposition to the doctrine here maintained.

However, I hope it will be not taken amiss, that I think as I do, merely because I herein differ from him, though so much my superior, and one whose name and memory I am under distinguishing obligations, on every account, to treat with great respect and honour. Especially may I justly expect, that it will not be charged on me as a crime, that I do not think in every thing just as he did, since none more than he himself asserted this Scriptural and Protestant maxim, that we ought to *call no man on earth Master*, or make the authority of the greatest and holiest of mere men the ground of our belief of any doctrine in religion. Certainly we are not obliged to think any man infallible, who himself utterly disclaims infallibility. Very justly Mr. Stoddard observes in his *Appeal to the Learned*, p. 97. "All Protestants agree, that there is no infallibility at Rome; and I know no body else pretends to any, since the apostles' days." And he insists, in his *preface* to his *sermon* on the same subject,—That it argues no want of a due respect in us to our *forefathers*, for us to *examine* their opinions. Some of his words in that *preface* contain a good apology for me, and are worthy to be repeated on this occasion. They are as follows:

"It may possibly be a *fault* (says Mr. Stoddard) to depart from the ways of our *fathers:* But it may also be a *virtue*, and an eminent act of obedience, to depart from them in *some* things. Men are wont to make a great *noise*, that we are bringing in innovations, and depart from the *old way:* But it is beyond me, to find out wherein the *iniquity* does lie. We may see cause to *alter some practices of our fathers*, without despising *them*, without priding ourselves in our wisdom, without apostacy, without abusing the advantages God has given us, without a spirit of compliance with corrupt men, without inclinations to superstition, without making disturbance in the church of God: And there is no reason, that it should be turned as a *reproach* upon us Surely it is *commendable* for us to *examine* the practices of

our fathers; we have no sufficient reason to take practices upon *trust* from them. Let them have as high a character as belongs to them; yet we may not look upon their principles as *oracles*. NATHAN himself missed it in his conjecture about *building the house of God*. He that believes principles because *they* affirm them, makes *idols* of them. And it would be no *humility*, but *baseness* of spirit, for us to judge ourselves *incapable* to examine the principles that have been handed down to us. If we be by any means *fit to open the mysteries of the gospel*, we are capable to judge of *these* matters: And it would *ill* become us, so to indulge ourselves in *ease*, as to *neglect* the examination of received principles. If the practices of our fathers in any particulars were *mistaken*, it is *fit* they should be *rejected;* if they be not, they will bear examination. If we be forbidden to examine their practice, that will cut off all hopes of *reformation*."

Thus, in these very seasonable and apposite sayings, Mr. STODDARD, *though dead, yet speaketh*: And here (to apply them to my own case) he tells *me*, that I am not at all blameable, for not *taking his principles on trust;* that notwithstanding *the high character* justly *belonging to him*, I ought not to *look on his principles as oracles*, as though he could not *miss it*, as well as NATHAN himself *in his conjecture about building the house of God;* nay, surely that I am even *to be commended, for examining his practice*, and judging for myself; that *it would ill become me*, to do otherwise; that this *would be no manifestation of humility*, but rather shew a *baseness of spirit;* that if I *be not capable to judge for myself in these matters, I am by no means fit to open the mysteries of the gospel;* that if I *should believe his principles, because he advanced them, I should be guilty of making him an idol*.—Also he tells his and my flock, with all others, that it *ill becomes them, so to indulge their ease, as to neglect examining received principles and practices;* and that it is *fit, mistakes in any particulars be rejected:* That if in some things I differ in my judgment from him, it would be very unreasonable on this account to *make a great noise, as though I were bringing in innovations, and departing from the old way;* that I *may see cause to alter some practices of my grandfather and predecessor, without despising* him, *without priding myself in my wisdom, without apostacy, without despising the advantages God has given me, without inclination to superstition, and without making disturbance in the church of God;* in short, that *it is beyond him to find out wherein the iniquity of my so doing lies;* and that *there is no reason why it should be turned as a reproach upon me*. Thus, I think, he sufficiently vindicates my conduct in the present case, and warns all with whom I am concerned, not to be at all displeased with me, or to find the least fault with me, merely because I examine for myself, have a judgment of my own, and am for practising in some particulars different from him, how positive soever he was that his judgment and practice were right. It is reasonably hoped and expected, that they who have a great regard to his judgment, will impartially regard his judgment, and hearken to his admonition in these things.

I can seriously declare, that an affectation of making a shew as if I

were something wiser than that excellent person, is exceeding distant from me, and very far from having the least influence in my appearing to oppose, in this way of the press, an opinion which he so earnestly maintained and promoted. Sure I am, I have not affected to vary from his judgment, nor in the least be governed by a spirit of contradiction, neither indulged a cavilling humour, in remarking on any of his arguments or expressions.—I have formerly been of *his opinion*, which I imbibed from his books, even from my childhood, and have in my proceedings conformed to *his practice*; though never without some difficulties in my view, which I could not solve. Yet, however, a distrust of my own understanding, and deference to the authority of so venerable a man, the seeming strength of some of his arguments, together with the success he had in his ministry, and his great reputation and influence, prevailed for a long time to bear down my scruples. But the difficulties and uneasiness on my mind increasing, as I became more studied in divinity, and as I improved in experience: this brought me to closer diligence and care to *search the scriptures*, and more impartially to examine and weigh the arguments of my *grandfather*, and such other authors as I could get on his side of the question. By which means, after long searching, pondering, viewing, and reviewing, I gained satisfaction, became fully settled in the opinion I now maintain, as in the discourse here offered to public view; and dared to proceed no further in a practice and administration inconsistent therewith: Which brought me into peculiar circumstances, laying me under an inevitable necessity publicly to declare and maintain the opinion I was thus established in; as also to do it from the press, and to do it at this time without delay.

It is far from a pleasing circumstance of this publication, that it is against what my honoured *grandfather* strenuously maintained, both from the pulpit and press. I can truly say, on account of this and some other considerations, it is what I engage in with the greatest reluctance that ever I undertook any public service in my life. But the state of things with me is so ordered, by the sovereign disposal of the great Governor of the world, that my doing this appeared to me very necessary and altogether unavoidable. I am conscious, not only is the interest of religion concerned in this affair, but my own reputation, future usefulness, and my very subsistence, all seem to depend on my freely opening and defending myself, as to my principles, and agreeable conduct in my pastoral charge; and on my doing it from the press: In which way alone am I able to state and justify my opinion, to any purpose before the country, (which is full of noise, misrepresentations, and many censures concerning this affair,) or even before my own people, as all would be fully sensible, if they knew the exact state of the case.—I have been brought to this necessity in divine providence, by such a situation of affairs and coincidence of circumstances and events, as I choose at present to be silent about; and which it is not needful, nor perhaps expedient, for me to publish to the world.

One thing among others that caused me to go about this business with so much backwardness, was the fear of a bad improvement

some ill-minded people might be ready, at this day, to make of the doctrine here defended; particularly that wild enthusiastical sort of people, who have of late gone into unjustifiable *separations*, even renouncing the ministers and churches of the land in general, under pretence of setting up a pure church. It is well known, that I have heretofore publicly remonstrated, both from the pulpit and press, against very many of the notions and practices of this kind of people: and shall be very sorry if what I now offer to the public, should be any occasion of their encouraging or strengthening themselves in those notions and practices. To prevent which, I would now take occasion to declare, I am still of the same mind concerning them that I have formerly manifested. I have the same opinion concerning the religion and inward experiences chiefly in vogue among them, as I had when I wrote my *Treatise on Religious Affections*, and when I wrote my *Observations and Reflections on Mr. Brainerd's Life*. I have no better opinion of their notion of a *pure church* by means of a *spirit of discerning*, their *censorious outcries* against the standing ministers and churches in general, their *lay-ordinations*, their *lay-preachings*, and *public-exhortings*, and administering *sacraments*; their assuming, self-confident, contentious, uncharitable *separating spirit*; their going about the country, *as sent by the Lord*, to make proselytes; with their many other extravagant and wicked ways. My holding the doctrine that is defended in this discourse, is no argument of any change of my opinion concerning them; for when I wrote those two books before mentioned, I was of the same mind concerning the qualifications of communicants at the Lord's table that I am of now.

However, it is not unlikely, that some will still exclaim against my principles, as being of the same pernicious tendency with those of the *separatists*. To such I can only by a solemn protestation aver the sincerity of my aims, and the great care I have exercised to avoid whatsoever is erroneous, or might be in any respect mischievous. But as to my success in these my upright aims and endeavours, I must leave it to every reader to judge for himself, after he has carefully perused, and impartially considered the following discourse: which, considering the nature and importance of the subject, I hope all serious readers will accompany with their earnest prayers to the *Father of Lights*, for his gracious direction and influence. And *to Him be glory in the churches by Christ Jesus*.

A PREFACE

BY HIS AMERICAN FRIENDS.

THOUGH the doctrine here maintained by our dear and reverend brother, was brought over hither by the pious and judicious fathers of this country from the Puritans in England, and held by them and their successors in our churches above threescore years without dissention; yet some good and learned men have since gone into another way of thinking in this matter. And as the WORD OF GOD is our only rule of judging, and this only can bind the conscience in religion, it must needs concern every man to search the scriptures, that he may come to as satisfying a knowledge as may be, whether he has a right to the Lord's supper, and whether it be his immediate duty to partake of it, or admit of others. And for all that we had hitherto read on this subject, it seemed to us, there wanted further searchings and discoveries.

And though we have not all had opportunity to read the composure following; yet we apprehend the reverend author singularly qualified to manage this important argument, from his great acquaintance with the scriptures, and diligent application to the study of them, with a special aim to find the mind of CHRIST and settle his judgment in this particular; both to get more light himself, and communicate the same to others. And we have this peculiar motive to excite attention to what he writes, that he is so far from arguing from the prejudice or influence of education, that being brought up in the contrary way of thinking, and more inclined thereto from a special veneration of his reverend grandfather; yet on carefully searching the sacred volumes, he was obliged to yield to those convictions they produced in him, and change his judgment.

The following Treatise contains the substance of those convictions, or the particular reasons of this alteration. And if those who are now in his former way of thinking, would with due seriousness, humility, calmness, diligence, and impartiality, search the Scriptures, and consider his arguments derived from them, looking up to GOD through CHRIST, and subjecting their minds entirely to him, they

may either see and yield to the same convictions, and find cause to change their judgments also, or will at least continue their fraternal affection to the worthy author, and others in the same sentiments with him.

We heartily pray that the reverend author and his flock may for a long time be happy together; that their cordial love and tenderness to each other may continue and operate in mutual and all lawful condescensions and forbearances under different sentiments in these particulars; that every one may be open to light, and guard against all prejudice, precipitance, and passion; that they may be very watchful against the devices of Satan to disunite or disaffect them; that they may study the things that make for peace and edification.—And the GOD of light, love and peace, will continue with them.

THOMAS PRINCE.
JOHN WEBB.
THOMAS FOXCROFT.
M. BYLES.

Boston, August 11, 1746.

ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE

EDINBURGH EDITION.

A narrative of the transactions to which the following Treatise refers, may be read in the account of the author's Life, which was printed originally at Boston, New-England, in 1765, and lately reprinted at Glasgow. The works of the Author are now very well known in this country. The world, it is apprehended, owe no small obligation to Dr. John Erskine, one of the ministers of this city, who first introduced them to their acquaintance.

There are very few persons attentive to the subjects on which President Edwards has written who will not acknowledge, that he has cast much light upon them. And nothing will prevent Christians from considering the present Treatise as one of the most able and interesting parts of his works, but prejudice and indifference about the subject of it. His own opinion of it may be seen in his preface. It will there appear, if persons should even be inattentive to its internal evidence, that it called forth the complete extent of his abilities, and was the fruit of dependence on the Father of Lights for instruction and preservation from error.

The whole of his works are now reprinted in Britain, excepting only his Defence of this Treatise, against the Objections of Mr. Solomon Williams. If the present performance, which is exceedingly scarce, meets with encouragement, the publisher intends to print it also.

Edinburgh, May 15, 1790

AN

HUMBLE INQUIRY

INTO THE

QUALIFICATIONS FOR FULL COMMUNION IN THE

VISIBLE CHURCH OF CHRIST

PART I.

THE QUESTION STATED AND EXPLAINED.

THE main question I would consider, and for the negative of which I would offer some arguments in the following discourse, is this; *Whether, according to the rules of* CHRIST, *any ought to be admitted to the communion and privileges of members of the visible church of* CHRIST *in complete standing, but such as are in profession, and in the eye of the church's Christian judgment, godly or gracious persons?*

When I speak of members of the visible church of Christ, *in complete standing*, I would be understood of those who are received as the proper immediate subjects of all the external privileges Christ has appointed for the ordinary members of his church. I say *ordinary members*, in distinction from any peculiar privileges and honours of church-officers and rulers. All allow, there are some that are in some respect in the church of God, who are not members in complete standing, in the sense that has been explained. All that acknowledge infant baptism, allow infants, who are the proper subjects of baptism, and are baptized, to be in some sort members of the Christian church; yet none suppose them to be members in such standing as to be the proper immediate subjects of all ecclesiasiastical ordinances and privileges: But that some further qualifications are requisite in order to this, to be obtained, either in a course of nature, or by education, or by divine grace. And some who are baptized in infancy, even after they come to be adult, may yet remain for a season short of such a standing as has been spoken

of; being destitute of sufficient knowledge, and perhaps some other qualifications, through the neglect of parents or their own negligence, or otherwise; or because they carelessly neglected to qualify themselves for ecclesiastical privileges by making a public profession of the Christian faith, or owning the Christian covenant, or forbear to offer themselves as candidates for these privileges; and yet not be cast out of the church, or cease to be in any respect its members: This, I suppose, will also be generally allowed.

One thing mainly intended in the foregoing question is, Whether any adult persons but such as are in the profession and in appearance endowed with the Christian grace or piety, ought to be admitted to the *Christian sacraments*. Particularly, whether they ought to be admitted to the *Lord's supper;* and, if they are such as were not baptized in infancy, ought to be admitted to *baptism*. Adult persons having those qualifications that oblige others to receive them as the proper immediate subjects of the Christian sacraments, is a main thing intended in the question, by being such as *ought to be admitted to the communion and privileges of members of the visible church, in complete standing*. There are many adult persons that by the allowance of all are in some respects within the church of God, who are not members in good standing, in this respect. There are many, for instance, that have not at present the qualifications proper to recommend them to the *Lord's supper:* There are many scandalous persons, who are under suspension. The late venerable Mr. Stoddard, and many other great divines suppose, that even excommunicated persons are still members of the church of God; and some suppose, the worshippers of Baal in Israel, even those who were bred up such from their infancy, remained still members of the church of God. And very many protestant divines suppose, that the members of the church of Rome, though they are brought up and live continually in gross idolatry, and innumerable errors and superstitions that tend utterly to make void the gospel of Christ, still are in the visible church of Christ: Yet, I suppose, no orthodox divines would hold these to be properly and regularly qualified for the Lord's supper. It was therefore requisite, in the question before us, that a distinction should be made between the members of the visible church *in general*, and members *in complete standing*.

It was also requisite, that such a distinction should be made in the question, to avoid lengthening out this discourse exceedingly, with needless questions and debates concerning the state of baptized infants; that it is *needless* as to my present purpose. Though I have no doubts about the doctrine of infant baptism; yet God's manner of dealing with such infants as are regularly

dedicated to him in baptism, is a matter liable to great disputes and many controversies, and would require a large dissertation by itself to clear it up; which, as it would extend this discourse beyond all bounds, so it appears not necessary in order to a clear determination of the present question. The revelation of God's word is much plainer and more express concerning adult persons, that act for themselves in religious matters, than concerning infants. The scriptures were written for the sake of adult persons, or those that are capable of knowing what is written. It is to such the apostle speaks in the epistles, and to such only does God speak throughout his word; and the scriptures especially speak for the sake of these, and about those to *whom* they speak. And therefore if the word of God affords us light enough concerning those spoken of in the question, as I have stated it, clearly to determine the matter with respect to them, we need not wait till we see all doubts and controversies about baptized infants cleared and settled, before we pass a judgment with respect to the point in hand. The denominations, characters, and descriptions, which we find given in the scripture to visible Christians, and to the visible church, are principally with an eye to the church of Christ in its adult state and proper standing. If any one was about to describe that kind of birds called doves, it would be most proper to describe grown doves, and not young ones in the egg or nest, without wings or feathers. So if any one should describe a palm-tree or olive-tree by their visible form and appearance, it would be presumed that they described those of these kind of trees in their natural and proper state; and not as just peeping from the ground, or as thunder-struck or blown down. And therefore I would here give notice, once for all, and when in the ensuing discourse I use such like phrases as *visible saints*, *members of the visible church*, &c. I, for the most part, mean persons that are *adult* and in *good standing*.

The question is not, whether Christ has made converting grace or piety *itself* the condition or rule of his people's admitting any to the privileges of members in full communion with them. There is no one qualification of the *mind* whatsoever, that Christ has properly made the term of this; not so much as a common belief that Jesus is the Messiah, or a belief of the being of a God. It is the credible *profession* and *visibility* of these things, that is the church's rule in this case. Christian *piety* or *godliness* may be a qualification requisite to communion in the Christian sacraments, just in the same manner as *a belief* that Jesus is the Messiah, and the scriptures the word of God, are requisite qualifications; and in the same manner as some kind of *repentance* is the qualification in one that has been suspended for being grossly scandalous, in order to his coming

again to the Lord's supper; and yet godliness *itself* not to be properly the rule of the church's proceeding, in like manner as such a belief and repentance, as I have mentioned, are not their rule. It is a *visibility* to the eye of a Christian judgment, that is the rule of the church's proceeding in each of these cases.—There are two *distinctions* must be here observed. As,

1. We must distinguish between such qualifications as are requisite to give a person a right to ecclesiastical privileges in *foro ecclesiæ*, or a right to be admitted by the church to those privileges; and those qualifications that are a proper and good foundation for a man's *own* conduct in coming and offering himself as a candidate for immediate admission to these privileges. There is a difference between these. Thus, for instance, a profession of the belief of a future state and of revealed religion, and some other things that are internal and out of sight, and a visibility of these things to the eye of a christian judgment, is all relating to these things, that is requisite to give a man a right in *foro ecclesiæ*, or before the church; but it is the real existence of these things, that is what lays a proper and *good* foundation for his making this profession, and so demanding these privileges. None will suppose, that he has good and proper ground for such a conduct, who does not believe another world, nor believe the Bible to be the word of God. And then,

2. We must distinguish between that which *nextly* brings an obligation on a man's conscience to seek admission to a Christian ordinance, and that which is a good foundation for the dictate of an enlightened well-informed conscience, and so is properly a *solid* foundation of a right in him to act thus. Certainly this distinction does really take place among mankind in innumerable cases. The dictates of men's consciences are what bring them under almost *immediate* obligation to act: But it is that which is a good foundation for such a dictate of an *enlightened* conscience, that alone is a *solid* foundation of a right in him so to act. Believing the doctrine of the Trinity *with all the heart*, in some sense (let us suppose a moral sense) is one thing requisite in order to a person's having a solid foundation of a right in him to go and demand baptism in the name of the Trinity: But his *best judgment* or dictate of his conscience, concerning his believing this doctrine with this sincerity, or with all his heart, may be sufficient to bring an obligation on his conscience. Again, when a delinquent has been convicted of scandal, it is repentance in some respect sincere (suppose a moral sincerity) that is a proper foundation of a right in him to offer himself for forgiveness and restoration: But it is the dictate of his conscience or his *best judgment* concerning his sincerity, that is the thing which immediately obliges him to offer himself. It is repentance *itself*, that is the proper qualification

fundamental of his right, and without which he cannot have a proper right; for though he may be deceived, and think he has real repentance when he has not, yet he has not properly a right to be deceived; and perhaps deceit in such cases is always owing to something blameable, or the influence of some corrupt principle: But yet his best judgment brings him under obligation. In the same manner, and no otherwise, I suppose that Christian grace itself is a qualification requisite in order to a proper solid ground of a right in a person to come to the Christian sacraments. But of this I may say something more when I come to answer objections.

When I speak, in the question, of being godly or gracious in the eye of a Christian judgment; by *Christian judgment* I intend something further than a kind of mere *negative* charity, implying that we forbear to censure and condemn a man, because we do not know but that he may be godly, and therefore forbear to proceed on the foot of such a censure or judgment in our treatment of him: as we would kindly entertain a stranger, not knowing but in so doing we entertain an angel or precious saint of God. But I mean *a positive judgment*, founded on some positive appearance, or visibly, some outward manifestations that ordinarily render the thing probable. There is a difference between suspending our judgment, or forbearing to condemn, or having some hope that *possibly* the thing may be so, and so hoping the best; and a positive judgment in favour of a person. For having some hope, only implies that a man is not in utter despair of a thing, though his prevailing opinion may be otherwise, or he may suspend his opinion. Though we cannot know a man believes that Jesus is the Messiah, yet we expect some positive manifestation or visibility of it, to be a ground of our charitable judgment: So I suppose the case is here.

When I speak of Christian *judgment*, I mean a judgment wherein men do properly exercise reason, and have their reason under the due influence of love and other Christian principles; which do not blind reason, but regulate its exercises; being not contrary to reason, though they be very contrary to censoriousness or unreasonable niceness and rigidness.

I say in the eye of the Church's *Christian judgment*, because it is properly a visibility to the eye of the public charity and not of a private judgment, that gives a person a right to be received as a visible saint by the public. If any are known to be persons of an honest character, and appear to be of good understanding in the doctrines of Christianity, and particularly those doctrines that teach the grand condition of salvation, and the nature of true saving religion, and publicly and seriously profess the great and main things wherein the essence of true

religion or godliness consists, and their conversation is agreeable; this justly recommends them to the good opinion of the public, whatever suspicions and fears any particular person, either the minister, or some other, may entertain, from what he in particular has observed, perhaps from the manner of his expressing himself in giving an account of his experiences, or an obscurity in the order and method of his experiences, &c. The minister, in receiving him to the communion of the church, is to act as a public officer, and in behalf of the public society, and not merely for himself, and therefore is to be governed, in acting, by a proper visibility of godliness in the eye of the public.

It is not my design, in holding the negative of the foregoing question, to affirm, that all who are regularly admitted as members of the visible church in complete standing, ought to be believed to be godly or gracious persons, when taken collectively, or considered in the gross, by the judgment of any person or society. This may not be, and yet each person taken singly may visibly be a gracious person to the eye of the judgment of Christians in general. These two are not the same thing, but vastly diverse; and the latter may be, and yet not the former. If we should know so much of a thousand persons one after another, and from what we observed in them should have a prevailing opinion concerning each one of them, singly taken, that they were indeed pious, and think the judgment we passed, when we consider each judgment apart, to be right; it will not follow, when we consider the whole company collectively, that we shall have so high an opinion of our own judgment, as to think it probable, there was not one erroneous judgment in the whole thousand. We all have innumerable judgments about one thing or other, concerning religious, moral, secular, and philosophical affairs, concerning past, present, and future matters, reports, facts, persons, things, &c. And concerning all the many thousand dictates of judgment that we have, we think them every one right, taken singly; for if there was any one that we thought wrong, it would not be our judgment; and yet there is no man, unless he is stupidly foolish, who, when he considers all in the gross, will say he thinks that his every opinion he is of, concerning all persons and things whatsoever, important and trifling, is right, without the least error. But the more clearly to illustrate this matter, as it relates to visibility, or probable appearances of holiness in professors: Supposing it had been found by experience concerning precious stones, that such and such external marks were *probable* signs of a diamond; and supposing, by putting together a great number of experiments, the probability is *as ten to one*, that, take one time with another, *one in ten* of the stones which

have these marks (and no visible signs to the contrary) proves to be not a true diamond. Then it will follow, that when I find a particular stone with these marks, and nothing to the contrary, there is a probability of *ten to one*, concerning that stone, that it is a diamond; and so concerning each stone that I find with these marks: But if we take *ten* of these together, it is as probable as not, that some *one* of the ten is spurious; because, if it were not as likely as not, that *one to ten* is false, or if taking *one ten* with another, there were not *one in ten* that was false, then the probability of those that have these marks, being true diamonds, would be more than *ten to one*, contrary to the supposition; because that is what we mean by a probability of *ten to one*, that they are not false, viz. that take one *ten* with another, there will be *one* false stone among them, and no more. Hence if we take an *hundred* such stones together, the probability will be just *ten to one*, that there is *one* false among them; and as likely as not that there are *ten* false ones in the whole hundred. And the probability of the individuals must be much greater than *ten* to one, even a probability of more than a *hundred* to one, in order to its making it probable that every one is true. It is an easy mathematical demonstration. Hence the negative of the foregoing question by no means implies a pretence of any scheme, that shall be effectual to keep all hypocrites out of the church, and for the establishing in that sense *a pure church*.

When it is said, those who are admitted, &c. ought to be by profession *godly* or *gracious* persons; it is not meant, they should merely *profess* or *say* that they are converted or are gracious persons, that they *know* so, or *think* so; but that they profess the great things wherein Christian piety consists, viz. a supreme respect to God, faith in Christ, &c. Indeed it is necessary, as men would keep a good conscience, that they should think that these things are in them, which they profess to be in them; otherwise they are guilty of the horrid wickedness of wilfully making a lying profession. Hence it is supposed to be necessary, in order to men's regularly and with a good conscience coming into communion with the church of Christ in the Christian sacraments, that they themselves should suppose the essential things, belonging to Christian piety, to be in them.

It does not belong to the present question, to consider and determine what the nature of Christian piety is, or wherein it consists: This question may be properly determined, and the determination demonstrated, without entering into any controversies about the nature of conversion, &c. Nor does an asserting the negative of the question determine any thing how particular the profession of godliness ought to be, but only that the more essential things, which belong to it, ought to be pro-

fessed. Nor is it determined, but that the public professions made on occasion of persons' admission to the Lord's supper, in some of our churches, who yet go upon that principle, that persons need not esteem themselves truly gracious in order to a coming conscientiously and properly to the Lord's supper; I say, it is not determined but that some of these professions are sufficient, if those that made them were taught to use the words, and others to understand them, in no other than their proper meaning, and principle and custom had not established a meaning very diverse from it, or perhaps an use of the words without any distinct and clear determinate meaning.

PART II.

REASONS FOR THE NEGATIVE OF THE FOREGOING QUESTION.

HAVING thus explained what I mean, when I say, *That none ought to be admitted to the communion and privileges of members of the visible church of Christ in complete standing, but such as are in profession and in the eye of the church's Christian judgment godly or gracious persons;* I now proceed to observe some things which may tend to evince the truth of this position.

SECT. I.

None ought to be admitted as members of the visible church of Christ but visible and professing Saints.

I BEGIN with observing, I think it is both evident by the word of God, and also granted on all hands, that none ought to be admitted as members of the visible church of Christ but *visible* and *professing saints*, or visible and professing Christians. —We find the word *saint*, when applied to men, used two ways in the New Testament. The word in some places is so used as to mean those that are *real* saints, who are converted, and are truly gracious persons; as 1 Cor. vi. 2. "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?" Eph. i. 18. "The riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints." Chap. iii. 17, 18. "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith, that ye being

rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth," &c. 2 Thess. i. 10. "When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe." So Rev. v. 8. Chap viii. 4. and xi. 18. and xiii. 10, and xiv. 12. and xix. 8. In other places the word is used so as to have respect not only to real saints, but to such as were saints in visibility, appearance, and profession; and so were outwardly, as to what concerns their acceptance among men and their outward treatment and privileges, of the company of saints. So the word is used in very many places, which it is needless to mention, as every one acknowledges it.

In like manner we find the word *Christian* used two ways: The word is used to express the same thing as "a righteous man that shall be saved," I Pet. iv. 16—18. Elsewhere it is so used as to take in all that were Christians by profession and outward appearance; Acts xi. 26. So there is a twofold use of the word *disciples* in the New Testament. There were disciples in name, profession, and appearance; and there were those whom Christ calls *disciples indeed*, John viii. 30, 31.—The word is αληθως, *truly*. The expression plainly supposes this distinction of true or real disciples, and those who were the same in pretence and appearance. See also Luke xiv. 25—27. and John xv. 8. The same distinction is signified, in the New Testament, by those that *live*, being alive from the dead, and risen with Christ, 2 Cor. iv. 11. Rom. vi. 11. and elsewhere; and those who *have a name to live*, having only a pretence and appearance of life. And a distinction of the visible church of Christ into these two, is plainly signified of the growth of the good ground, and that in the stony and thorny ground, which had the same appearance and show with the other, till it came to wither away; and also by the two sorts of virgins, (Matt. xxv.) who both had a show, profession, and visibility of the same thing. By these things and many others which might be observed, it appears, that the distinction of *real* and *visible* or professing saints is scriptural, and that the visible church was made up of these two, and that none are according to Scripture admitted into the visible church of Christ, but those who are visible and professing saints or Christians. And it is the more needless to insist longer upon it, because it is not a thing in controversy; so far as my small reading will inform me, it is owned by all Protestants. To be sure, the most eminent divine in New England who has appeared to maintain the Lord's supper to be properly a converting ordinance, was very full in it. In his *Appeal to the Learned*, in the title-page, and through the treatise, he supposes that all who come to the Lord's supper, must be *visible saints*, and sometimes speak of them as *professing saints*, page 85, 86: And supposes that it is requisite in order to their being admitted to

the communion of the Lord's table, that they make a personal public profession of their faith and repentance to the just satisfaction of the church, page 93, 94. In these things the whole of the position that I would prove is in effect granted. If it be allowed (as it is allowed on all sides) that none ought to be admitted to the communion of the Christian visible church, but visible and professing saints or Christians; if these words are used in any propriety of speech, or in any agreement with Scripture representations, the whole of that which I have laid down is either implied or will certainly follow.

As *real* saints are the same with real converts, or really gracious persons, so *visible* saints are the same with visible converts, or those that are visibly converted and gracious persons. *Visibility* is the same with *manifestation* or *appearance* to our view and apprehension. And therefore to be visibly a gracious person, is the same thing as to be a truly gracious person to our view, apprehension, or esteem. The distinction of *real* and *visible* does not only take place with regard to saintship or holiness, but with regard to innumerable other things. There is visible and real truth, visible and real honesty, visible and real money, visible and real gold, visible and real diamonds, &c. &c. *Visible* and *real* are words that stand related one to another, as the words *real* and *seeming*, or *true* and *apparent*. Some seem to speak of *visibility* with regard to saintship or holiness, as though it had no reference to the *reality*, or as though it were a distinct reality by itself; as though by visible saints were not meant those who to appearance are real saints or disciples indeed, but properly a distinct sort of saints, which is an absurdity. There is a distinction between real money and visible money, because all that is esteemed money and passes for money is not real money, but some is false and counterfeit. By visible money, is not meant that which is taken and passes for a different sort from true money, but that which is esteemed and taken as real money, or which has that appearance that recommends it to men's judgment and acceptance as true money; though men may be deceived, and some of it may finally prove not to be so.

There are not properly two sorts of saints spoken of in Scripture. Though the word *saints* may be said indeed to be used two ways in Scripture, or used so as to reach two sorts of persons; yet the word has not properly two significations in the New Testament, any more than the word *gold* has two significations among us: the word gold among us is so used as to extend to several sorts of substances; it is true, it extends to true gold, and also to that which only appears to be gold, and is reputed such, and by that appearance or visibility some things that are not *real* obtain the *name* of gold: but this is not pro-

perly through a diversity in the signification of the word, but by a diversity of the application of it, through the imperfection of our discerning. It does not follow that there are properly two sorts of saints, because some who are not *real* saints, do by the show and appearance they make obtain the *name* of saints, and are reputed such, and whom by the rules of Scripture (which are accommodated to our imperfect state) we are directed to receive and treat as saints; any more than it follows that there are two sorts of honest men, because some who are not truly honest men, yet being so seemingly or visibly, do obtain the name of honest men, and ought to be treated by us as such. So there are not properly two distinct churches of Christ, one the real, and another the visible; though they that are visibly or seemingly of the one only church of Christ, are many more than they who are really of his church; and so the visible or seeming church is of larger extent than the real.

Visibility is a relative thing, and has relation to an eye that views or beholds. Visibility is the same as appearance or exhibition to the eye; and to be a visible saint is the same as to appear to be a real saint in the eye that beholds; not the eye of God, but the eye of man. Real saints or converts are those that are so in the eye of God; visible saints or converts are those who are so in the eye of man; not his bodily eye, for thus no man is a saint any more in the eye of a man than he is in the eye of a beast; but the eye of his mind, which is his judgment or esteem. There is no more visibility of holiness in the brightest professor to the eye of our bodies, without the exercise of the reason and judgment of our minds, than may be in a machine. But nothing short of an apparent probability, or a probable exhibition, can amount to a visibility to the eye of man's reason or judgment. The eye which God has given to *man* is the eye of reason; and the eye of a *Christian* is reason sanctified, regulated, and enlightened, by a principle of Christian love. But it implies a contradiction to say, that that is visible to the eye of reason, which does not appear probable to reason. And if there be a man that is in this sense a visible saint, he is in the eye of a rational judgment a real saint. To say a man is visibly a saint, but not visibly a real saint, but only visibly a visible saint, is a very absurd way of speaking; it is as much as to say, he is to appearance an appearing saint; which is in effect to say nothing, and to use words without signification. The thing which must be visible and probable, in order to *visible saintship*, must be saintship *itself*, or real grace and true holiness; not visibility of saintship, not unregenerate morality, not mere moral sincerity. To pretend, or in any respect to exhibit, moral sincerity, makes nothing visible beyond what is pretended to or exhibited. For a man to have that visibly, which if he had it

really, and have nothing more, would not make him a real saint, is not to be visibly a saint.

Mr. STODDARD, in his *Appeal to the Learned*, seems to express the very same notion of visibility, and that visibility of saintship which is requisite to persons coming to the Lord's supper, that I have here expressed. In page 10, he makes a distinction between being *visibly* circumcised in heart, and being *really* so; evidently meaning by the latter saving *conversion;* and he allows the former, viz. a visibility of *heart-circumcision*, to be necessary to a coming to the Lord's supper. So that according to him, it is not a visibility of *moral sincerity* only, but a visibility of *circumcision of heart*, or saving conversion, that is a necessary requisite to a person's coming to the Lord's table. And in what manner this must be *visible*, he signifies elsewhere, when he allows, that it must be so *to a judgment of charity; a judgment of rational charity.* This he expressly allows over and over; as in page 2, 3, 28, 33, 73, and 95: And *having reason to look upon them as such*, page 28. And towards the close of his book, he declares himself steadfastly of the mind, that it is requisite those be not admitted to the Lord's supper, who do not *make a personal and public profession of their* faith *and* repentance, *to the just satisfaction of the church*, page 93, 94. But how he reconciled these passages with the rest of his Treatise, I would modestly say, I must confess myself at a loss. And particularly, I cannot see how they consist with what this venerable and ever-honoured author says, page 16, in these words: "Indeed by the rule that God has given for admissions, if it be carefully attended, *more* unconverted persons will be admitted than converted." I would humbly inquire, how those visible qualifications can be the ground of a *rational judgment*, that a person is *circumcised in heart*, which nevertheless at the same time, we are sensible are so far from being any probable signs of it, that they are *more* frequently without it, than with it. The appearance of that thing surely cannot imply an appearing probability of another thing, which at the same time we are sensible is most frequently, and so most probably, without that other thing.

Indeed I can easily see, how that may seem visible, and appear probable to God's people by reason of the imperfect and dark state they are in, and so may oblige their charity, which yet is not real, and which would not appear at all probable to *angels*, who stand in a clearer light. And the different degrees of light, in which God's church stands, in different *ages*, may make a difference in this respect. The church under the New Testament being favoured by God with a vastly greater light in divine things, than the church under the Old Testament, that might make some difference, as to the kind of profession

of religion that is requisite, under these different dispensations, in order to a visibility of holiness; also a proper visibility may fail in the greater number in some extraordinary case, and in exempt circumstances. But how those signs can be a ground of a rational judgment that a thing is, which, at that very time, and under that degree of light we then have, we are sensible do oftener fail than not, and this ordinarily, I own myself much at a loss. Surely nothing but *appearing reason* is the ground of a *rational judgment*. And indeed it is impossible, in the nature of things, to form a *judgment*, which at that very time we think to be not only without, but against *probability*.

If it be said, that although persons do not profess that wherein sanctifying grace consists, yet seeing they profess to believe the doctrines of the gospel, which God is wont to make use of in order to sanctification, and are called the doctrine which is according to godliness; and since we see nothing in their lives to make us determine, that they have not had a proper effect on their hearts, we are obliged in charity to hope, that they are real saints, or gracious persons, and to treat them accordingly, and so to receive them into the Christian church, and to its special ordinances:

I answer, this objection does in effect suppose and grant the very thing mainly in dispute. For it supposes, that a gracious character is the thing that ought to be aimed at in admitting persons into the communion of the church; and so that it is needful to have this charity for persons, or such a favourable notion of them, in order to our receiving them as properly qualified members of the society, and properly qualified subjects of the special privileges to which they are admitted. Whereas, the doctrine taught is, that sanctifying grace is not a necessary qualification, and that there is no need that the person himself, or any other, should imagine he is a person so qualified. The assigned reason is, because it is no qualification requisite in itself; the ordinance of the Lord's supper is as proper for them that are not so qualified, as for those that are; it being according to the design of the institution a converting ordinance, and so an ordinance as much intended for the good of the unconverted, as of the converted; even as it is with the preaching of the gospel. Now if the case be so, why is there any talk about a charitable hoping they are converted, and so admitting them? What need of any charitable hope of such a qualification, in order to admitting them to an ordinance that is as proper for those who are without this qualification, as for those that have it? We need not have any charitable hope of any such qualification in order to admit a person to hear the word preached. What need have we to aim at any thing beyond the proper qualifications? And what need of any charitable opinion or

hope of any thing further? Some sort of belief, that Jesus is the Messiah, is a qualification properly requisite to a coming to the Lord's supper; and therefore it is necessary that we should have a charitable hope, that those have such a belief whom we admit; though it be not necessary that we should know it, it being what none can know of another. But as to grace or Christian piety, it clearly follows, on the principles which I oppose, that no kind of visibility or appearance, whether direct or indirect, whether to a greater or less degree, no charity or hope of it, have any thing at all to do in the affair of admission to the Lord's supper; for, according to them, it is properly a converting ordinance. What has any visibility or hope of a person being already in health to do in admitting him into an hospital for the use of those means that are appointed for the healing of the sick, and bringing them to health? And therefore it is needless here to dispute about the nature of visibility; and all arguing concerning a profession of Christian doctrines, and an orderly life, being a sufficient ground of public charity, and an obligation on the church to treat them as saints, are wholly impertinent and nothing to the purpose. For on the principles which I oppose, there is no need of any ground for treating them as saints, in order to admitting them to the Lord's supper, the very design of which is to make them saints, any more than there is need of some ground of treating a sick man as being a man in health, in order to admitting him into an hospital. Persons, by the doctrine that I oppose, are not taught to offer themselves as candidates for church communion under any such notion, or with any such pretence, as their being gracious persons; and therefore surely when those that teach them, receive them to the ordinance, they do not receive them under any such notion, nor has any appearance, hope, or thought of it, any thing to do in the case.

The apostle speaks of the members of the Christian church, as those that made a profession of godliness. 2 Cor. ix. 13. "They glorified God for your *professed* subjection to the gospel of Christ." 1 Tim. ii. 9, 10. "In like manner also that women adorn themselves in modest apparel—not with costly array; but which becometh women professing godliness, with good works." The apostle is speaking of the women that were members of that great church of Ephesus, which Timothy for the present had the care of; and he speaks of them as supposing that they all professed godliness. By the allowance of all, *profession* is one thing belonging to the visibility of Christianity or holiness, in the members of the visible church. Visible holiness is an appearance or exhibition of holiness, by those things which are external, and so fall under our notice and observation. And these are two, viz. *profession*, and outward *behaviour*, agreeable

to that profession. That profession which belongs to visible saintship, must be a profession of *godliness*, or real saintship; for a profession makes nothing visible, beyond what is professed. What is it, to be a saint by profession, but to be by profession a true saint? For to be by profession a false saint, is to be by profession no saint; and only to profess that, which if never so true, is nothing peculiar to a saint, is not to be a professing saint.

In order to man's being properly a *professing Christian*, he must profess the *religion of Jesus Christ:* And he surely does not profess the religion that was taught by Jesus Christ, if he leaves out of his profession the most essential things that belong to that religion. That which is most essential in that religion itself, the profession of that is essential in a profession of that religion; for (as I have observed elsewhere) that which is most essential in a thing, in order to its being truly denominated that thing, the same is essentially necessary to be expressed or signified in any exhibition or declaration of that thing, in order to its being truly denominated a declaration or exhibition of that thing. If we take a more inconsiderable part of Christ's religion, and leave out the main and most essential, surely what we have, cannot be properly called the religion of Jesus Christ: So if we profess only a less important part, and are silent about the most important and essential part, it cannot be properly said that we profess the religion of Jesus Christ. And therefore we cannot in any propriety be said to profess Christ's religion, unless we profess those things wherein consist piety of heart, which is vastly the most important and essential part of that religion, and is in effect all; being that without which all the rest that belongs to it, is nothing, and wholly in vain. But they who are admitted to the Lord's supper, proceeding on the principles of those who hold it to be a *converting* ordinance, do in no respect profess Christian piety, neither in whole nor in part, neither explicitly nor implicitly, directly nor indirectly; and therefore are not professing Christians, or saints by profession. I mean, though they may be godly persons, yet as they come to the ordinance without *professing godliness*, they cannot properly be called *professing saints.*

Here it may be said, that although no *explicit* and *formal* profession of those things which belong to true piety, be required of them; yet there are many things they do, that are a *virtual* and *implicit* profession of these things: Such as their owning the Christian covenant, their owning God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to be their God; and by their visibly joining in the public prayers and singing God's praises, there is a shew and implicit profession of supreme respect to God and love to him; by joining in the public confessions, they make a shew of

repentance; by keeping sabbaths and hearing the word, they make a shew of a spirit of obedience; by offering to come to sacraments, they make a shew of love to Christ and a dependence on his sacrifice.

To this I answer; it is a great mistake, if any one imagines, that all these external performances are of the nature of a *profession*, of any thing that belongs to *saving grace*, as they are commonly used and understood. None of them are so, according to the doctrines that are taught and embraced, and the customs that are established in such churches as proceed on the footing of the principles forementioned. For what is *professing*, but exhibiting, uttering, or declaring, either by intelligible words, or by other established signs that are equivalent? But in such churches, neither their publicly saying, that they *avouch God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to be their God*, and that *they give themselves up to him*, and *promise to obey all his commands*, nor their coming to the Lord's supper, or to any other ordinances, are taken for expressions or signs, of any thing belonging to the essence of Christian piety. But on the contrary, the public doctrine, principle, and custom in such churches, establishes a *diverse* use of these words and signs. People are taught, that they may use them all, and not so much as make any pretence to the least degree of *sanctifying grace*; and this is the established custom. So they are used, and so they are understood. And therefore whatever some of these words and signs may *in themselves* most properly and naturally import, they entirely cease to be significations of any such thing among people accustomed to understand and use them otherwise; and so cease to be of the nature of a profession of Christian piety. There can be no such thing among such a people, as either an explicit or implicit *profession of godliness* by any thing which (by their established doctrine and custom) an *unregenerate* man may and ought to say and perform, knowing himself to be so. For let the words and actions otherwise signify what they will, yet people have in effect agreed among themselves, that persons who use them need not intend them so, and that others need not understand them so. And hence they cease to be of the nature of any pretension to grace. And surely it is an absurdity to say, that men openly and solemnly profess grace, and yet do not so much as pretend to it. If a certain people should agree, and it should be an established principle among them, that men might and ought to use such and such words to their neighbours, which according to their proper signification were a profession of entire love and devoted friendship towards the man they speak to, and yet not think that he has any love in his heart to him, yea, and know at the same time that he had a reigning enmity against him; and it

was known that this was the established principle of the people, would not these words, whatever their proper signification was, entirely cease to be any profession or testimony of friendship to his neighbour? To be sure, there could be no visibility of it to the eye of reason.

Thus it is evident, that those who are admitted into the church on the principles that I oppose, are not *professing saints*, nor *visible saints;* because that thing which alone is truly saintship, is not what they profess, or pretend, or have any visibility of, to the eye of a Christian judgment. Or if they in fact be visible and professing saints, yet, they are not admitted *as such;* no profession of true saintship, nor any manner of visibility of it, has any thing to do in the affair.

There is one way to evade these things, which has been taken by some. They plead, although it be true, that the scripture represents the members of the visible church of Christ as professors of *godliness;* and they are abundantly called by the name of *saints* in scripture, undoubtedly because they were saints by profession, and in visibility, and the acceptance of others, yet this is not with any reference to *saving* holiness, but to quite another sort of saintship, viz. *moral sincerity;* and that this is real saintship, discipleship, and godliness, which is professed, and visible in them, and with regard to which, as having an appearance of it to the eye of reason, they have the name of *saints*, *disciples*, &c. in scripture.—It must be noted, that in this objection the visibility is supposed to be of *real* saintship, discipleship, and godliness, but only another sort of *real godliness*, than that which belongs to those who shall finally be owned by Christ as his people, at the day of judgment.

To which I answer, this is a mere evasion; the only one, that ever I saw or heard of; and I think the only one possible. For it is certain, they are not professors of sanctifying grace, or true saintship: The principle proceeded on being, that they need make no pretence to that; nor has any visibility of saving holiness any thing to do in the affair. If then they have any holiness at all, it must be of another sort. And if this evasion fails, all fails, and the whole matter in debate must be given up. Therefore I desire that this matter may be impartially considered and examined to the very bottom; and that it may be thoroughly inquired, whether this distinction of these two sorts of *real Christianity*, *godliness*, and *holiness*, is a distinction of which Christ in his word is the author; or whether it be an human invention of something which the New Testament knows nothing of, devised to serve and maintain an hypothesis. And here I desire that the following things may be observed:

1. According to this hypothesis, the words *saints*, *disciples*,

and *Christians*, are used *four* ways in the New Testament, as applied to four sorts of persons. (1.) To those that in *truth* and *reality* are the *heirs of eternal life*, and that shall judge the world, or have indeed that saintship which is saving. (2.) To those who profess this, and pretend to and make a fair shew of a supreme regard to Christ, and to renounce the world for his sake, but have not real ground for these pretences and appearances. (3.) To those who, although they have not saving grace, yet have that other sort of *real godliness*, or *saintship*, viz. moral *sincerity* in religion; and so are properly a sort of *real saints*, *true Christians*, *sincerely godly persons*, and *disciples indeed*, though they have no saving grace. And (4.) to those who make a profession and have a visibility of this latter sort of sincere Christianity, and are nominally such kind of saints, but are not so indeed.—So that here are two sorts of *real* Christians, and two sorts of *visible* Christians; two sorts of *invisible* and real churches of Christ, and two sorts of *visible* churches. Now will any one that is well acquainted with the New Testament say, there is in that the least appearance or shadow of such a four-fold use of the words, *saints*, *disciples*, &c.? It is manifest by what was observed before, that these words are there used but two ways; and that those of mankind to whom these names are applied, are there distinguished into but two sorts, viz. Those who have *really* a saving interest in Christ, spiritual conformity and union to him, and those who have a name for it, as having a profession and appearance of it. And this is further evident by various representations, which we there find of the visible church; as in the company of virgins that went forth to meet the bridegroom, we find a distinction of them into but two sorts, *viz.* The wise that had both *lamps* and *oil;* and those who had *lamps* indeed like the wise virgins, (therein having an external shew of the same thing,) but really had no *oil;* signifying that they had the same profession and outward shew of religion, and entertained the same hopes with the wise virgins. So when the visible church is represented by the husbandman's floor, we find a distinction but of two sorts, viz. the *wheat* and the *chaff*. And, when the church is compared to the husbandman's field, we find a distinction but of two sorts, the *wheat* and the *tares*, which (naturalists observe) appear exactly like the wheat, till it comes to bring forth its fruit; representing that those who are only visible Christians, have an appearance of the nature of *wheat*, which shall be gathered into Christ's barn, that is, of the *nature* of saving grace.

2. It is evident, that those who had the name of *disciples* in the times of the New Testament, bore that name with reference to a visibility of the *same relation* to Christ, which they had who should be *finally owned as his*. This is manifest. John

viii. 30, 31. "As he spake these words, many believed on him. Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my *disciples indeed.*" (Compare Luke xiv. 25, 26, 27. and John xv. 8.) The phrase, *disciples indeed*, is relative; and has reference to a *visibility, pretence*, or *name*, only, to which it is set in opposition; which makes it evident, that those who then bore the name of *disciples*, had a visibility and pretence of *discipleship indeed.* For true discipleship is not properly set in opposition to any thing else but a pretence to the *same thing*, that is not true. The phrase, *gold indeed*, is in opposition to something that has the appearance of that *same metal*, and not to an appearance of *brass.* If there were another sort of real discipleship in those days, besides saving discipleship, persons might be Christ's *disciples indeed*, or *truly* (as the word in the original is) without *continuing in his word*, and without selling all that they had, and without hating father and mother and their own lives, for his sake. By this it appears, that those who bore the name of disciples in those times were distinguished into but two sorts, *disciples in name* or visibility, and *disciples indeed;* and that the visibility and profession of the former was of the discipleship of the latter.

3. The same thing is evident by 1 John ii. 19. "They went out from us, because they were not of us: If they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us." The words naturally suggest and imply, that those professing Christians, who at last proved *false*, did, before they *went out*, seem to belong to the society of the *true* saints, or those endued with persevering grace and holiness. They seemed to be of their number, and so were accepted in the judgment of charity.

4. The name that visible Christians had in the days of the New Testament, was of *saving Christianity*, and not of *moral sincerity;* for they had a *name to live*, though many of them were *dead*, Rev. iii. 1. Now it is very plain what that is in religion which is called by the name of *life*, all over the New Testament, viz. saving grace; and I do not know that any thing else, of a religious nature, is ever so called.

5. The visibility of saintship in the apostles' days, was not of *moral sincerity*, but *gracious* sincerity, or saving saintship. For they are spoken of as being visibly of the number of those saints who shall judge the world, and judge angels. 1 Cor. vi. 1, 2, 3. "Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the *saints?* Do ye not know, that the *saints shall judge the world?* And if the world shall be judged BY YOU, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that WE *shall judge angels?*" These things manifestly imply, that if the Christian Corinthians were what they supposed they were, what they professed to be, and

what they were accepted to be, they were some of those saints who at the day of judgment should judge angels and men.

6. That the visibility was not only of moral sincerity but saving grace, is manifest, because the apostle speaks of visible Christians as visible "members of Christ's body, of his flesh, and of his bones, *and* one spirit with him, *and* temples of the Holy Ghost," Eph. v. 30. and 1 Cor. vi. 16, 19. And the apostle Peter speaks of visible Christians as those who were visibly such righteous persons as should be saved; and that are distinguished from the *ungodly*, and *them who obey not the gospel, who shall perish.* 1 Pet. iv. 16, 17, 18. "Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God on this behalf. For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God; and if it first begin at us," (*us* Christians, comprehending himself, and those to whom he wrote, and all of that sort,) "what shall the end of them be that obey not the gospel of God? And if the *righteous* scarcely be *saved*, where shall the *ungodly* and *sinners* appear?"

7. That the visibility was not merely of moral sincerity, but of that sort of saintship which the saints in *heaven* have, is manifest by this, that they are often spoken of as visibly *belonging* to *heaven*, and as of the *society* of the saints in heaven. So the apostle in his Epistle to the Ephesians speaks of them as visibly of the same *household* or *family of God*, a part of which is in *heaven.* Chap. ii. 19. "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the *household* of God." Together with the next chapter, verse 15. "Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named." Where the context and continuation of discourse demonstrates, that he is still speaking of the same *family* or *household* he had spoken of in the latter part of the preceding chapter. So all visible Christians are spoken of as visibly the children of the church which is in *heaven.* Gal. iv. 26. "Jerusalem which is above, is free, which is the mother of us all." The same apostle speaks of visible Christians as being visibly come to the *heavenly city*, and having joined the glorious *company of angels* there, and as visibly belonging to the "general assembly and church of the first-born, that are written in heaven, and to the spirits of just men made perfect," Heb. xii. 22, 23. And elsewhere they are spoken of as being visibly of the number of those who have their "names written in the book of life," Rev. iii. 5. and xxii. 19. They who truly have their names written in the book of life, are God's true saints, that have saving grace: as is evident by Rev. xiii. 8. "And all that dwell on the earth shall worship him, whose names are not *written in the book of life* of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." And chapter xx. 12. "And another book was opened, which was

the book of life." Verse 15. " And whosoever was not found written in the book of life, was cast into the lake of fire." We are told in the conclusion of this chapter, how they were disposed of whose names were not written in the book of life; and then the prophet proceeds, in the next chapter, to tell us, how they were disposed of whose names were found there written, viz. that they were admitted into the New Jerusalem. Verse 27. " And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life." And yet in the next chapter it is implied, that some who were not truly gracious persons, and some that should finally perish, were visibly of the number of those that had both a *part* in the New Jerusalem, and also their *names* written in the *book of life.* Verse 19. " And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the *book of life*, and out of *the holy city.*"

8. That *baptism*, by which the primitive converts were admitted into the church, was used as an exhibition and token of their being visibly " regenerated, dead to sin, alive to God, having the old man crucified, being delivered from the reigning power of sin, being made free from sin, and become the servants of righteousness, those servants of God that have their fruit unto that holiness whose end is everlasting life;" as is evident by Rom. vi. throughout. In the former part of the chapter, he speaks of the Christian Romans, as " dead to sin, *being* buried with Christ in baptism, having their old man crucified with Christ," &c. He does not mean only, that their baptism laid them under special obligations to these things, and was a mark and token of their engagement to be thus hereafter; but was designed as a mark, token, and exhibition, of their being *visibly* thus already. As is most manifest by the apostle's prosecution of his argument in the following part of the chapter. Verse 14. " For sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace." Verse 17, 18. " God be thanked, ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness." Verse 22. " But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life."

9. It is evident, that it is not only a visibility of moral sincerity in religion, which is the Scripture qualification of admission into the Christian church, but a visibility of regeneration and renovation of heart, because it was foretold that God's people and the ministers of his house in the days of the Messiah, should not admit into the Christian church any that were not

visibly circumcised in heart. Ezek. xliv. 6—9. " And thou shalt say to the rebellious, even to the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord God, O ye house of Israel, let it suffice you of all your abominations, in that ye have brought into my sanctuary strangers uncircumcised in heart, and uncircumcised in flesh, to be in my sanctuary to pollute it, even my house, when ye offer my bread, the fat, and the blood ; and they have broken my covenant, because of all your abominations : And ye have not kept the charge of mine holy things, but ye have set keepers of my charge in my sanctuary for yourselves. Thus saith the Lord, no stranger *uncircumcised in heart, nor uncircumcised in flesh*, shall enter into my sanctuary, of any stranger that is among the children of Israel."

The venerable author of the *Appeal to the Learned*, says, (page 10,) " That this Scripture has no particular reference to the Lord's supper." I answer, though I do not suppose it has merely a reference to that ordinance, yet I think it manifest, that it has a reference to admitting persons into the Christian church, and to external Church privileges. It might be easy to prove, that these nine last chapters of Ezekiel must be a vision and prophecy of the state of things in the Church of God in the Messiah's days ; but I suppose it will not be denied, it being a thing wherein divines are so generally agreed. And I suppose none will dispute but that by the *house of God and his sanctuary*, which it is here foretold the *uncircumcised in heart* should not be admitted into in the days of the gospel, is meant the same *house*, *sanctuary*, or *temple* of God, that the prophet had just before been speaking of, in the foregoing part of the same chapter, and been describing throughout the four preceding chapters. But we all know, that the New Testament *house of God* is his *church*. Heb. iii. 3. " For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who builded the house, hath more honour than the house." Verse 6. " But Christ as a Son over his own house, whose house are we," &c. 2 Tim. ii. 20. " In a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and of earth," &c. 1 Tim. iii. 15. " That thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God." Eph. ii. 20, 21. " And are built upon the foundation of the prophets and apostles, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone ; in whom all the building fitly framed together, groweth into an holy temple in the Lord." 1 Cor. iii. 9. " Ye are God's building." Verse 16. " Know ye not, that ye are the temple of God ?" 1 Pet. ii. 5. " Ye also as lively stones are built up a spiritual house." Chap. iv. 17. " For the time is come, that judgment must begin at the house of God : And if it begin at us, what shall the end be ?" &c. Heb. x. 21. " And

having an high priest over the *house* of God." Ezekiel's temple is doubtless the same which it is foretold the Messiah should build. Zech. vi. 12, 13. "The man whose name is the branch —he shall build the *temple* of the Lord, even he shall build the *temple* of the Lord." And what the temple that Christ builds is, the apostle tells us, Heb. iii. 3, 6. The temple that Ezekiel in his vision was bid to observe the measures of, as *measured with a reed*, (Ezek. xl. 3, 4.) we have reason to think was the same the apostle John in his vision was bid to *measure with a reed*, Rev. xi. 1. And when it is here foretold that the *uncircumcised in heart* should not enter into the Christian *sanctuary* or church, nor have communion in the offerings of *God's bread, of the fat and blood*, that were made there, I think so much is at least implied, that they should not have communion in those ordinances of the Christian sanctuary, in which that *body* and *blood of Christ* were symbolically represented, which used of old to be symbolically represented by the fat and blood. For the admission into the Christian church here spoken of, is an admission into the *visible*, and not the *mystical* church; for such an admission is spoken of as is made by the officers of the church. And I suppose it will not be doubted, but that by *circumcision of heart* is meant the spiritual renewing of the heart; not any common virtues, which do not in the least change the nature, and mortify the corruption of the heart as is held by all orthodox divines, and as Mr. Stoddard in particular abundantly insisted. However, if any body disputes it, I desire that the Scripture may be allowed to speak for itself; for it very often speaks of *circumcision of heart*, and this every where, both in the Old Testament and New, manifestly signifies that great change of heart that was typified by the ceremony of *circumcision of the flesh*. The same which afterwards was signified by *baptism*, viz. *regeneration*, or else the progress of that work in sanctification; as we read of the *washing of regeneration, &c.* The apostle tells us what was signified both by circumcision and baptism, Col. ii. 11, 12. "In whom also ye are *circumcised* with the *circumcision* made without hands, in putting off the sins of the flesh by the *circumcision* of Christ, buried with him in *baptism;* wherein also you are risen with him, through the faith of the operation of God." Where I would observe by the way, he speaks of all the members of the church of Colosse as visibly *circumcised with this circumcision;* agreeable to Ezekiel's prophecy, that the members of the Christian church shall visibly have this *circumcision*. The apostle speaks, in like manner, of the members of the church of Philippi as spiritually *circumcised*, (i. e. in profession and visibility,) and tells wherein this circumcision appeared. Philip. iii. 3. "For we are the *circumcision*, which worship God in the spirit,

and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." And in Rom. ii. 28, 29, the apostle speaks of this Christian and Jewish circumcision together, calling the former the *circumcision of the heart.* "But he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the FLESH; but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly, and *circumcision* is that of THE HEART, in the spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God." And whereas in this prophecy of Ezekiel it is foretold, that none should enter into the Christian sanctuary or church, but such as are *circumcised in heart and circumcised in flesh;* thereby I suppose is intended, that none should be admitted but such as were visibly *regenerated*, as well as *baptised* with outward baptism.

By what has been observed, I think it abundantly evident, that the *saintship*, *godliness*, *and holiness*, of which, according to Scripture, professing Christians and visible saints do make a profession and have a visibility, is not any religion and virtue that is the result of common grace, or moral sincerity (as it is called,) but saving grace.—Yet there are many other clear evidences of the same thing, which may in some measure appear in all the following part of this discourse.

SECT. II.

All who are capable of it are bound to make an explicit open profession of the true religion.

I come to another reason, why I answer the question at first proposed, in the negative, viz. That it is a duty which in an ordinary state of things is required of all that are capable of it, *to make an explicit open profession of the true religion, by owning God's covenant;* or, in other words, *professedly and verbally to unite themselves to God in his covenant, by their own public act.*

Here I would (*first*) prove this point; and then (*secondly*) draw the consequence, and show how this demonstrates the thing in debate.

First, I shall endeavour to establish this point, viz. That it is the duty of God's people thus publicly to own the *covenant;* and that it was not only a duty in Israel of old, but is so in the Christian church, and to the end of the world; and that it is a duty required of *adult* persons before they come to sacraments. And this being a point of great consequence in this controversy, but a matter seldom handled, (though it seems to be generally taken for granted,) I shall be the more particular in the consideration of it.

This not only seems to be in itself most consonant to reason, and is a duty generally allowed in New-England, but is evidently a great institution of the word of God, appointed as a very important part of that public religion by which God's people should give honour to his name. This institution we have in Deut. vi. 13. "Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name." It is repeated, chap. x. 20. "Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, him shalt thou serve, and to him shalt thou cleave, and swear by his name." In both places it might have been rendered, *thou shalt swear in his name*, or *into his name*. In the original, *bishmo*, with the prefix *beth*, which signifies *in* or *into*, as well as *by*. And whereas, in the latter place, in our translation, it is said, *to him shalt thou cleave, and swear by his name*. The words are thus in the Hebrew, *ubho thidhbák ubhishmo tisshábhéang*. The literal translation of which is, *into him shalt thou cleave* (*or unite*,) *and into his name shalt thou swear*. There is the same prefix, *beth*, before *him*, when it is said, *Thou shalt cleave to him*, as before *his name*, when it is said, *Thou shalt swear by his name*. *Swearing into God's name*, is a very emphatical and significant way of expressing a person's taking on himself, by his own solemn profession, the name of God, as one of his people; or by swearing to or covenanting with God, uniting himself by his own act to the people *that are called by his name*. The figure of speech is something like that by which Christians in the New Testament are said to be baptized, εις το ονομα, INTO THE NAME *of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost*. So Christians are said to *be baptized into Christ*, Gal. iii. 17. This swearing by the name, or into the name of the Lord, is so often, and in such a manner spoken of by the prophets as a great duty of God's solemn public worship, as much as praying or sacrificing, that it would be unreasonable to understand it only, or chiefly, of occasionally taking an oath before a court of judicature, which, it may be, one-tenth part of the people never had occasion to do once in their lives. If we well consider the matter, we shall see abundant reason to be satisfied, that the thing intended in this institution was publicly covenanting with God. Covenanting in Scripture is very often called by the name of *swearing*, and a *covenant* is called *an oath*.* And particularly *God's covenant* is called *his oath*, Deut. xxxix. 12. "That thou shouldest enter into *covenant* with the Lord thy God, and into his *oath*." Ver. 14. "Neither with you only do I *make* this *covenant* and this *oath*." 1 Chron. xvi. 15, 16. "Be

* As Gen. xxi. 23. to the end; xxvi. 28. to the end; xxxi. 44. 53. Josh. ii. 12, &c. 1 Sam. xx. 16, 17. 42. 2 Kings xi. 4. Eccl. viii. 2. Ezek. xvi. 59; xvii. 16. and in many other places.

ye mindful always of his *covenant*:—Even of the *covenant* which he made with Abraham, and his *oath* unto Isaac." 2 Chron. xv. 12. "And they entered into *covenant* to seek the Lord God of their fathers." Ver. 14, 15. "And they *sware* unto the Lord with a loud voice; and all Judah rejoiced at the *oath*." Swearing *to the Lord*, or swearing *in*, or *into the* name of the Lord, are equipollent expressions in the Bible. The prefixes *beth* and *lamed* are evidently used indifferently in this case to signify the same thing, Zeph. i. 5. "That swear by the Lord, and that swear by Malcham." The word translated *to the Lord*, is *Laihovah*, with the prefix *lamed:* but *to Malcham*, is *Bemalcham*, with the prefix *beth*, *into Malcham*. In 1 Kings xviii. 32. it is said, "Elijah built an altar in the name of the Lord; *beshem*. Here the prefix *beth* is manifestly of the same force with *lamed*, in 1 Kings viii. 44. "The house I have built *for thy name*, or *to thy name*;" *leshem*.

God's people, in swearing to his name, or into his name, according to the institution, solemnly professed two things, viz. their *faith* and *obedience*. The former part of this profession of religion was called, *saying*, *The Lord liveth*. Jer. v. 2. "And though they say, The Lord liveth, yet surely they swear falsely." Verse 7. "They have sworn by them that are no gods:" that is, they had openly professed idol worship. Chap. iv. 2. "Thou shalt swear, The Lord liveth, in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness; and the nations shall bless themselves in him, and in him shall they glory." (Compare this with Isaiah xlv. 23, 24, 25.) Jer. xliv. 26. "Behold, I have sworn by my great name, saith the Lord, that my name shall no more be named in the mouth of any man of Judah in all the land of Egypt, *saying*, *The Lord liveth*;" *i. e.* they shall never any more make any profession of the true God, and of the true religion, but shall be wholly given up to Heathenism. See also Jer. xii. 16, and xvi. 14, 15. and xxiii. 7, 8. Hos. iv. 15. Amos viii. 14. and ver. 5.

These words, CHAI JEHOVAH, Jehovah liveth, summarily comprehend a profession of faith in that all-sufficiency and immutability of God, which is implied in the name JEHOVAH, and which attributes are very often signified in Scripture by God's being the LIVING GOD, as is very manifest from Josh. iii. 10. 1 Sam. xvii. 26, 36. 2 Kings xix. 4, 16. Dan. vi. 26. Psalm xviii. 46. and innumerable other places.

The other thing professed in swearing into the Lord was obedience, called, *Walking in the name of the Lord*. Micah iv. 5. "All people will walk every one in the name of his God, and we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever." Still with the prefix *beth*, *beshem*, as they were said to swear *beshem*, in the name, or into the name of the Lord.

This institution, in Deuteronomy, of swearing into the name of the Lord, or visibly and explicitly uniting themselves to him in covenant, was not prescribed as an extraordinary duty, to be performed on a return from a general apostacy, and some other extraordinary occasions: but is evidently mentioned in the institution, as a part of the public worship of God to be performed by all God's people, properly belonging to the visible worshippers of Jehovah; and so it is very often mentioned by the prophets, as I observed before, and could largely demonstrate, if there was occasion for it, and would not too much lengthen out this discourse.

And this was not only an institution belonging to Israel under the Old Testament, but also to Gentile converts, and Christians under the New Testament. Thus God declares concerning the Gentile nations, Jer. xii. 16. "If they will diligently learn the ways of my people, to SWEAR BY MY NAME, THE LORD LIVETH, as they taught my people to swear by Baal: then shall they be built in the midst of my people," *i. e.* they shall be added to my church; or, as the apostle Paul expresses it, Eph. ii. 19—22. "They shall be no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, and be built upon the foundation of Christ; in whom all the BUILDING fitly framed together, &c. In whom they also shall be BUILDED for an habitation of God through the Spirit." So it is foretold, that the way of public covenanting should be the way of the Gentiles joining themselves to the church in the days of the gospel, Isaiah xliv. 3, 4, 5. "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring, and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water-courses; one shall say, I am the Lord's, and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob, and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord,"—as subscribing an instrument whereby they bound themselves to the Lord. This was subscribing and covenanting themselves into the name of Israel, and *swearing into the name of the Lord*, in the language of those forementioned texts in Deuteronomy. So taking hold of God's covenant, is foretold as the way in which the sons of the stranger in the days of the gospel should be joined to God's church, and brought into God's sanctuary, and to have communion in its worship and ordinances, in Isaiah lvi. 3, 6, 7. So in Isaiah xix. 18, the future conversion of the Gentiles in the days of the gospel, and their being brought to profess the true religion, is expressed by saying, that they should SWEAR TO THE LORD OF HOSTS. "In that day shall five cities in the land of Egypt speak the language of Canaan, and swear

to the Lord of Hosts." So in Jer. xxiii. 5—8. it seems to be plainly foretold, that after Christ is come, and has wrought out his great redemption, the same way of publicly professing faith in the all-sufficient and immutable God, by swearing, The Lord liveth, should be continued, which was instituted of old; but only with this difference, that whereas formerly they covenanted with God as their Redeemer out of Egypt, now they shall as it were forget that work, and have a special respect to a much greater redemption. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise up unto David a righteous branch. Therefore they shall no more say, The Lord liveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; but, The Lord liveth, which brought up, and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country," &c.

Another remarkable place wherein it is plainly foretold, that the like method of professing religion should be continued in the days of the gospel, is Isaiah xlv. 22—25. "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else: I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow, EVERY TONGUE SHALL SWEAR: surely shall one say, In the Lord have I righteousness and strength: even to him shall men come:—In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory." This prophecy will have its last fulfilment at the day of judgment; but it is plain, that the thing most directly intended is the conversion of the Gentile world to the Christian religion. What is here called *swearing*, the apostle in citing this place, once and again calls *confessing*, Rom. xiv. 11.—"Every tongue shall confess to God." Philip. ii. 10.—"That every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord;" which is the word commonly used in the New Testament to signify making a public profession of religion. So Rom. x. 9, 10. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart, that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved: for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." "Where a public *profession of religion* with the mouth is evidently spoken of as a great duty of all Christ's people, as well as *believing in him;* and ordinarily requisite to salvation; not that it is necessary in the same manner that faith is, but in like manner as baptism is. Faith and verbal profession are jointly spoken of here as necessary to salvation, in the same manner as faith and baptism are, in Mark xvi. 16. "He that *believeth* and is *baptized*, shall be saved." And I know no good reason why we should not look on moral profession and covenanting with Christ

in those who are capable of it, as much of a stated duty in the Christian church, and an institution universally pertaining to the followers of Christ, as baptism.

And if explicit, open covenanting with God be a great duty required of all, as has been represented, then it ought to be expected of persons before they are admitted to the privileges of the adult in the church of Christ. Surely it is proper, if this explicit covenanting takes place at all, that it should take place before persons come to those ordinances wherein they, by their own act, publicly confirm and seal this covenant. This public transaction of covenanting, which God has appointed, ought to have existence, before we publicly confirm and seal this transaction. It was that by which the Israelites of old were introduced into the communion of God's nominal or visible church and holy city; as appears by Isaiah xlviii. 1, 2. "Hear ye this, O house of Jacob, which ARE CALLED BY THE NAME OF ISRAEL, and are come forth out of the waters of Judah, WHICH SWEAR BY THE NAME OF THE LORD, and make mention of the God of Israel, but not in truth nor in righteousness: FOR THEY CALL THEMSELVES OF THE HOLY CITY," &c. When, and after what manner particularly, the Israelites ordinarily performed this explicit covenanting, I do not know that we can be certain. But, as it was first done on occasion of God's first promulgating his law or covenant at Mount Sinai—on a repetition or renewed promulgation of it on the plains of Moab—on the public reading of the law in Josiah's time, (2 Kings xxiii. 3.)—on after the return from the captivity—and on the public reading of it at the feast of tabernacles, (Neh. viii. ix. and x.); so it appears to me most likely, that it was done every seventh year, when the law or covenant of God was, by divine appointment, read in the audience of all the people at the feast of tabernacles; at least by all who then heard the law read a first time, and who never had publicly owned the covenant of God before. There are good evidences that they never had communion in those ordinances which God had appointed as seals of his covenant, wherein they themselves were to be active, such as their sacrifices, &c. till they had done it. It is plainly implied in Psalm l. that it was the manner in Israel vocally to own *God's covenant*, or to *take it into their mouths*, before they sealed that covenant in their sacrifices. See verse 16. taken with the preceding part of the psalm, from verse 5. And that they did it before they partook of the passover, (which indeed was one of their sacrifices,) or entered into the sanctuary for communion in the temple-worship, is confirmed by the words of Hezekiah, when he proclaimed a passover, 2 Chron. xxx. 8. "Now be ye not stiff-necked, as your fathers were; but yield yourselves unto the Lord (in the Hebrew, Give the hand to the Lord,) and en-

ter into his sanctuary, which he hath sanctified for ever, and serve the Lord your God." *To give the hand*, seems to be a Hebrew phrase for entering into covenant, or obliging themselves by covenant, Ezra x. 19. "And they *gave their hands* that they would put away their wives." And, as has been already observed, it was foretold that Christians should in this way be admitted to communion in the privileges of the church of Christ.—Having thus established the *premises* of the argument, I now come to the *consequence*.

SECT. III.

That none ought to be admitted to the privileges of adult persons in the church of Christ, but such as make a profession of real piety.

The covenant to be owned or professed, is *God's covenant*, which he has revealed as the method of our spiritual union with him, and our acceptance as the objects of his eternal favour; which is no other than the *covenant of grace;* at least it is so, without dispute, in these days of the gospel. To own this covenant, is to profess the consent of our *hearts* to it; and that is the sum and substance of true piety. It is not only professing the assent of our understandings, that we understand there is such a covenant, or that we understand we are obliged to comply with it; but it is to profess the consent of our *wills*, it is to manifest *that we do comply with it.* There is mutual profession in this affair, a profession on Christ's part, and a profession on our part; as it is in *marriage.* And it is the same sort of profession that is made on both sides, in this respect, that each professes a consent of *heart.* Christ in his word declares an entire consent of heart as to what he offers; and the visible Christian, in the answer that he makes to it in his Christian profession, declares a consent and compliance of heart to his proposal. Owning the covenant is professing to make the transaction of that covenant our own. The transaction of that covenant is that of espousals to Christ; on our part, it is giving our souls to Christ as his spouse. There is no one thing that the covenant of grace is so often compared to in Scripture, as the marriage covenant; and the visible transaction, or mutual profession there is between Christ and the visible church, is abundantly compared to the mutual profession there is in marriage. In marriage the bride professes to yield to the bridegroom's suit, and to take him for her husband, renouncing all others, and to give up herself to him to be entirely and for ever possessed by him as his wife. But he that professes this

towards Christ, professes saving faith. They that openly covenanted with God according to the tenor of the institution, (Deut. x. 20.) visibly united themselves to God in the union of that covenant. They professed on their parts the union of the covenant of God, which was the covenant of grace. It is said in the institution, "Thou shalt cleave to the Lord, and swear by his name;" or, as the words more literally are, "Thou shalt unite unto the Lord, and swear into his name." So in Isaiah lvi. it is called a "joining themselves to the Lord." But the union, cleaving, or joining of that covenant is saving faith, the grand condition of the covenant of Christ, by which we are in Christ. This is what, on our part, brings us *into the Lord.* For a person explicitly or professedly to enter into the union or relation of the covenant of grace with Christ, is the same as professedly to do that which on our part is the uniting act, and that is the act of faith. To profess the covenant of grace, is to profess it, not as a spectator, but as one immediately concerned in the affair, as a party in the covenant professed; and this is to profess *that* in the covenant which belongs to us *as a party*, or to profess *our part* in the covenant; and that is the soul's believing acceptance of the Saviour. Christ's part is salvation, our part is a saving faith in him; not a feigned, but unfeigned faith; not a common, but special and saving faith; no other faith is the condition of the covenant of grace.

I know the distinction made by some, between the *internal* and *external covenant;* but, I hope, the divines that make this distinction, would not be understood, that there are really and properly *two* covenants of grace: but only that those who profess the one only covenant of grace, are of two sorts. There are those who comply with it *internally* and really, and others who do so only *externally*, that is, in profession and visibility. But he that externally and visibly complies with the covenant of grace, appears and professes to do so really.—There is also this distinction concerning the covenant of grace; it is exhibited two ways, the one *externally* by the preaching of the word, the other *internally* and spiritually by enlightening the mind rightly to understand the word. But it is with the *covenant*, as it is with the call of the gospel: He that really complies with the *external* call, has the *internal* call; so he that truly complies with the *external* proposal of God's covenant, as visible Christians profess to do, does indeed perform the inward condition of it. But the New Testament affords no more foundation for supposing two real and properly distinct covenants of grace, than it does to suppose two sorts of real Christians.

When those persons who were baptized in infancy properly own their baptismal covenant, the meaning is, that they now, being capable to act for themselves, do professedly and ex-

plicitly make their parents' act, in giving them up to God, their own, by expressly giving themselves up to God. But this no person can do, without either being deceived, or dissembling and professing what he himself supposes to be a falsehood, unless he supposes that in his heart he consents to be God's. A child of Christian parents never does that for himself which his parents did for him in infancy, till he gives himself wholly to God. But surely he does not do it, who not only keeps back a part, but the chief part, his heart and soul. He that keeps back his heart, does in effect keep back all; and therefore, if he be sensible of it, is guilty of solemn wilful mockery, if at the same time he solemnly and publicly professes that he gives himself up to God. If there are any words used by such, which in their proper signification imply that they give themselves up to God, and if these words, as they intend them to be understood, and as they are understood by those that hear them, according to their established use and custom among that people, do not imply, that they do it really, but do truly reserve or keep back the chief part; it ceases to be a profession of giving themselves up to God, and so ceases to be a professed covenanting with God. The thing which they profess belongs to no existing covenant of God; for God has revealed no such covenant, in which our transacting of it is a giving up ourselves to him with reserve, or holding back our souls, our chief part, and in effect our all. And therefore, although such public and solemn professing may be a very unwarrantable and great abuse of words, and taking God's name in vain, it is no professed covenanting with God.

One thing, as observed, that belonged to Israel's *swearing into the name of the Lord*, was *saying, the Lord liveth*; whereby they professed their faith in God's all-sufficiency, immutability, and faithfulness. But if they really had such a faith, it was a saving grace. To them who indeed trust in the all-sufficiency of God, he will surely be an all-sufficient portion; and them who trust in God's immutability and faithfulness, he surely will never leave nor forsake. There were two ways of swearing *Jehovah* liveth, that we read of in scripture; one we read of, Jer. ii. 2. "Thou shalt swear, The Lord liveth, in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness:" And the other way is *swearing falsely*, which we read of in the next chapter, verse 2, 3. "And though they say, The Lord liveth, yet surely they swear falsely." And certainly none ought to do this. It follows, "O Lord, are not thine eyes upon the truth?" *i. e.* God desires sincerity of heart in those that profess religion. Here a gracious sincerity is opposed to a false profession; for when it is said, "O Lord, are not thine eyes upon the truth?" the expression is parallel with Psalm li. 6. "Behold thou

desirest truth in the inward parts." 1 Sam. xvi, 7. "Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." Psalm xi. 7. "His countenance doth behold the upright." But these texts speak of a gracious sincerity. Those spoken of, Jer. iv. 2, that "sware, The Lord liveth, in truth, in judgment, and righteousness," were gracious persons, who had a thorough conversion to God, as appears by the preceding verse, "If thou wilt return, O Israel, saith the Lord, return unto me;" *i. e.* Do not do as Judah was charged with doing in the foregoing chapter, verse 10- "Judah hath not turned unto me with her whole heart, but feignedly." Do not do thus, "but if thou wilt return, return unto me." And then it is added in the second verse, "And thou shalt swear, The Lord liveth, in truth," &c.; that is, then your profession of religion will be worth regarding, you will be indeed what you pretend to be, you will be Israelites indeed, in whose profession is no guile. They who said, The Lord liveth, in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness; said the Lord liveth, as David did, Psalm xviii. 46. "The Lord liveth, and blessed be my Rock." And as the apostle says he did, 1 Tim. iv. 10. "We trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe." And as he would have Timothy exhort rich men to do, chap. vi. 17. "That they trust not in uncertain riches, but in the living God." When the apostle speaks of a profession of our faith in Christ, as one duty which all Christians ought to perform, as they seek salvation, it is the profession of a *saving faith.* His words plainly imply it: "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." The faith which was to be *professed with the mouth*, was the same which the apostle speaks of *as in the heart*, but that is saving faith. The latter is yet plainer in the following words: "for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Believing unto righteousness is saving faith; but it is evidently the same faith which is spoken of, as *professed with the mouth*, in the next words in the same sentence. And that the Gentiles, in professing the Christian religion, or swearing to Christ, should profess saving faith, is implied, Isaiah xlv. 23, 24.—"Every tongue shall swear; surely shall one say, In the Lord have I righteousness and strength:" *i. e.* should profess entirely to depend on Christ's righteousness and strength.

For persons merely to promise, that they will believe in Christ, or that they will hereafter comply with the conditions and duties of the covenant of grace, is not to own that covenant. Such persons do not profess now to enter into the covenant of

grace with Christ, or into the relation of that covenant to Christ. All they do at present, is to say, they will do it hereafter; they profess, that they will hereafter obey that command of God, to *believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ.* But what is such a profession good for, and what credit is to be given to such promises of *future obedience;* when at the same time they pretend no other at present, than to live and continue in rebellion against those great commands which give no allowance or licence for delay? They who do thus, instead of properly owning the covenant, do rather for the present visibly reject it. It is not unusual, in some churches, where the doctrine I oppose has been established, for persons at the same time that they come into the church, and pretend to own the covenant, freely to declare to their neighbours, they have no imagination that they have any true faith in Christ, or love to him. Such persons, instead of being professedly united to Christ, in the union of the covenant of grace, are rather visibly destitute of the love of Christ; and so, instead of being qualified for admission to the Lord's supper, are rather exposed to that denunciation of the apostle, 1 Cor. xvi. 22. "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ; let him be Anathema Maranatha."

That outward covenanting which is agreeable to Scripture institution, is not only a promising which is future (though that is not excluded,) but a professing what is *present*, as it is in the marriage covenant. For a woman to promise that she will hereafter renounce all other men for the sake of him who makes suit to her, and will in some future time accept of him for her husband, is not for her now to enter into the marriage covenant with him. She that does this with a man, professes now to accept of him, renouncing all others; though promises of hereafter behaving towards him as a wife, are also included in the transaction. It seems the primitive converts to Christianity, in the profession they made of religion, in order to their admission into the Christian church, and in their visibly entering into covenant, in order to the initiating seal of the covenant in baptism, did not *explicitly* make any promises of any thing future. They only professed the present sentiments and habit of their minds, they professed that they *believed in Christ*, and so were admitted into the church by baptism; and yet undoubtedly they were, according to forementioned prophecies, admitted in the way of public covenanting. As the covenant-people of God, they owned the covenant before the seal of the covenant was applied. Their professing faith in Christ was visibly owning the covenant of grace, because faith in Christ was the grand condition of that covenant. Indeed, if the faith which they professed in order to baptism, was only an

historical or doctrinal faith (as some suppose,) or any common faith, it would not have been any visible entering into the covenant of grace; for a common faith is not the condition of that covenant; nor would there properly have been any covenanting in the case. If we suppose, the faith they professed was the grace by which the soul is united to Christ, their profession was a covenanting in this respect also, that it implied an engagement of future obedience; for true faith in Christ includes in its nature an acceptance of him as our Lord and King, and devoting ourselves to his service. But a profession of historical faith implies no profession of accepting Christ as our king, nor engagement to submit to him as such.

When the Israelites publicly covenanted with God, according to the institution in Deuteronomy, they did not only promise something future, but professed something present; they *avouched Jehovah to be their God*, and also promised to keep his commands. Thus it was in that solemn covenant transaction between God and the people on the plains of Moab; which is summarily described, Deut. xxvi. 17, 18. "Thou hast avouched the Lord this day to be thy God, and to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and to hearken unto his voice; and the Lord hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people, as he hath promised thee, and that thou shouldest keep all his commandments." The people, in avouching God for their God, professed a compliance with the terms of the covenant of grace, as summarily expressed in those words, "I will be thy God, and thou shalt be my people." They that avouch the Lord to be their God, profess to accept of Jehovah as their God; and that is to accept him as the object of their supreme respect and trust. For that which we choose as the object of our highest regard, that, and that only, do we take *as our God*. None, therefore, that value and love the world more than Jehovah, can, without lying, or being deceived, avouch Jehovah to be their God. And none that do not trust in Christ, but trust more in their own strength or righteousness, can avouch Christ to be their Saviour. To avouch God to be our God, is to profess that he is our God *by our own act;* i. e. that we choose him to be our chief good and last end, the supreme object of our esteem and regard, to whom we devote ourselves. And if we are sensible that we do not do this *sincerely*, we cannot profess that we actually do it: for he that does not do it sincerely, does not do it at all. There is no room for the distinction of a moral sincerity and gracious sincerity in this case. A supreme respect of heart to God, or a supreme love to him, which is real, is but of one sort. Whoever does with any reality at all make God the object of the supreme regard of his heart, is certainly a

gracious person. And whoever does not make God the supreme object of his respect with a gracious sincerity, certainly does not do it with any sincerity. I fear, while leading people in many of our congregations, who have no thought of their having the least spark of true love to God in their hearts, to say, publicly and solemnly, that *they avouch God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to be their God*, and that *they give themselves up to him*, we have led them to say they know not what. To be sure, they are very obscure expressions, if they mean any thing that a carnal man does, under the reigning power of sin and enmity against God.

Here possibly it may be objected, that it is unreasonable to suppose any such thing should be intended, in the profession of the congregation in the wilderness, as a gracious respect to God, that which is the condition of God's covenant, when we have reason to think that so few of them were truly gracious. But I suppose, upon mature consideration, this will not appear at all unreasonable. It is no more unreasonable to suppose this people to make a profession of that respect to God, which they had not in their hearts now, than at other times when we are informed they did so, as in Ezek. xxxiii. 31. "They come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people:" [*i. e.* as though they were my saints, as they profess to be, ["For with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness." So in the apostle's time, people professed that to be in their hearts towards God which was not there. The apostle is speaking of them, when he says, Tit. i. 16. "they profess that they know God, but in works they deny him." This was common among that people; God declares them to be an *hypocritical nation*, Isaiah x. 6. And it is certain, this was the case with them in the wilderness; they there professed that respect to God which they had not; as is evident by Psal. lxxviii. 36, 37. "They did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues; for their heart was not right with him, neither were they steadfast in his covenant." In owning the covenant with God, they professed *their heart was right with him*, because it is mentioned as an evidence of their having *lied* or dealt falsely in their profession, that *their heart was not right with him*, and so proved not steadfast in God's covenant, which they had owned. If their heart had been *right with God*, they would have been truly pious persons; which is a demonstration, that what they professed was true piety. It also appears that if they had had such a heart in them, as they pretended to have, they would have been truly pious persons, Deut. v.; where we have a rehearsal of their covenanting at Mount Sinai: Concerning this it is said, verse 28, 29. "And the Lord heard the voice of your words, when ye spake unto

me; and the Lord said unto me, They have well said all that they have spoken. O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them and with their children for ever." The people were mistaken about their disposition and preparation of heart to go through the business of God's service, as the man in the parable, who undertook to build a tower, without counting the cost. Nor need it seem at all incredible, that the generation who covenanted at Mount Sinai, should, the greater part of them, be deceived, and think their *hearts* thoroughly disposed to give up themselves for ever to God, if we consider how much they had strongly to move their *affections*. They saw the wonders wrought in Egypt and at the Red Sea, where they were led through on dry ground, and the Egyptians miraculously destroyed; whereby their affections were greatly raised, and they *sang God's praises*. And particularly they now saw at Mount Sinai, the astonishing manifestations of God's majesty. Probably the greater part of the sinners among them were deceived with false affections; and if there were others less affected and not deceived, it is not incredible that they, in those circumstances, should wilfully dissemble in their profession, and so in a more gross sense *flatter God with their lips, and lie to him with their tongues*. And these things are more credible concerning a generation peculiarly left to hardness and blindness of mind in divine matters, and peculiarly noted in the Book of Psalms for hypocrisy. And the generation of their children, who owned the covenant on the plains of Moab, had much to move their affections; they saw the awful judgments of God on their fathers. God had brought them through the wilderness, and subdued Sihon king of the Amorites, and Og the king of Bashan before them.—They had heard Moses' affecting rehearsal of the whole series of God's wonderful dealings with them, together with his most pathetic exhortations. But it was also a time of great revival of religion and powerful influence of the Spirit of God, and that generation was probably the most excellent that ever was in Israel. There is more good and less hurt spoken of them, than of any other generation that we have any account of in Scripture.* A very great part of them swore in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness. And no wonder that others at such a time fell in, either *deceiving*, or *being deceived*, with common affections; as is usual in times of great works of God for his church, and of the flourishing of religion. In succeeding generations, as the people grew more corrupt, I suppose, their covenanting, or swearing into the name of the

* See Numb. xiv. 31. Deut. i. 39. and viii. 15, 16. Josh. xxii. 2. and verse 11 to the end; and xxiii. 8. Deut. iv. 4. Josh. xxiv. 31. Jude ii. 17, 22. Psal. lxviii. 14. Jer. ii. 2, 3, 21. and xxxi. 2, 3. Hos. ix. 10.

Lord degenerated into a matter of mere form and ceremony; even as subscribing religious articles seems to have done with the church of England; and as, it is to be feared, owning the covenant, as it is called, has too much done in New England; it being visibly a prevailing custom for persons to neglect this, till they come to be married, and then to do it for their credit's sake, and that their children may be baptized. And I suppose there was commonly a great laxness in Israel among the priests who had the conduct of this affair. There were many things in the nature of that comparatively carnal dispensation, which negatively gave occasion for such things: that is, whereby it had by no means so great a tendency to prevent such irregularities, as the more excellent dispensation introduced by Christ and his apostles. And though these things were testified against by the prophets, before the Babylonish captivity; yet God, who is only wise, did designedly in a great measure wink at these, and many other great irregularities in the church, till *the time of reformation* should come, which the Messiah was to have the honour of introducing. But of these things I may perhaps have occasion to say something more, when I come to answer the objection concerning the passover.

Now to return to the argument from the nature of covenanting with God, or owning God's covenant. As to the promises which are herein either explicitly or implicitly made, these imply a profession of true piety. For in the covenant of grace universal obedience is engaged, obedience to all the commands of God; and the performance of inward spiritual duties is as much engaged, as external duties; and in some respects much more. Therefore he that visibly makes the covenant of grace his own, promises to perform those internal duties, and to perform all duties with a gracious sincerity. We have no warrant, in our profession of God's covenant, to *divide* the duties of it, to take some, and leave out others: especially to leave out those great commands, *of believing with the heart*, of *loving the Lord our God with all our heart and with all our soul, and our neighbour as ourselves.* He that leaves out these, in effect leaves out all; for these are the sum of our whole duty, and of all God's commands. If we leave these out of our profession, surely it is not the covenant of grace which we profess. The Israelites, when they covenanted with God at Mount Sinai, and said, when God had declared to them the ten commandments, "All that the Lord hath spoken will we do, and be obedient," promised, that as they *professed to know God*, they would *in works* not *deny*, but own and honour him, and would conform to those *two great commandments*, which are the sum of all the ten, and concerning which God said, "These words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart," Deut. vi. 6.—

And when they covenanted on the plains of Moab, they promised to keep and do God's commands, " with all their heart, and with all their soul," as is very evident by Deut. xxvi. 16, 17. So it was also when the people owned their covenant in Asa's time, 2 Chron. xv. 12. " They entered into a covenant to seek the Lord God of their fathers, with all their heart, and with all their soul." We have also another remarkable instance, 2 Kings xxiii. 3, and 2 Chronicles xxxiv. 31.

Now he who is wholly under the power of a *carnal mind*, which is *not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be*, cannot promise these things without either great deceit, or the most manifest and palpable absurdity. Promising supposes the person to be conscious to himself, or persuaded of himself, that he has *such an heart in him;* for his lips pretend to declare his heart. The nature of a promise implies intention and design. And proper real intention implies will, disposition, and compliance of heart. But no natural man is properly willing to do these duties, nor does his heart comply with them : and to make natural men believe otherwise, tends greatly to their hurt. A natural man may be willing, from self-love, and from sinister views, to use means and take pains that he may obtain a willingness or disposition to these duties : But that is a very different thing from actually being willing, or truly having a disposition to them. So he may promise, that he will, from some considerations or other, take great pains to obtain such a heart ; but this is not the promise of the covenant of grace. Men may make many religious promises to God some way relating to the covenant of grace, which yet are not themselves the promises of that covenant ; nor is there any thing of the nature of covenanting in the case, because although they should actually fulfil their promises, God is not obliged by promise to them. If a natural man promises to do all that it is possible for a natural man to do in religion, and fulfils his promises, God is not obliged, by any covenant that he has entered into with man, to perform any thing at all for him, respecting his saving benefits. And therefore he that promises these things only, enters into no covenant with God ; because the very notion of entering into covenant with any being, is entering into a mutual agreement, doing or engaging that which, if done, the other party becomes engaged on his part. The New Testament informs us but of one covenant God enters into with mankind through Christ, and that is the covenant of grace ; in which God obliges himself to nothing in us that is exclusive of *unfeigned faith*, and the spiritual duties that attend it. Therefore if a natural man makes never so many vows, that he will perform all external duties, and will pray for help to do spiritual duties, and for an ability and will to comply with the covenant of grace, from such principles as he has, he

does not *lay hold of God's covenant*, nor properly enter into any covenant with God. For we have no opportunity to covenant with God in any other way, than that which he has revealed; he becomes a covenant-party in no other covenant. It is true, every natural man that lives under the gospel, is obliged to comply with the terms of the covenant of grace; and if he promises to do it, his promise may increase his obligation, though he *flattered God with his mouth, and lied to him with his tongue*, as the children of Israel did in promising. But it will not thence follow, that they ought knowingly to make a lying promise, or that ministers and churches should countenance them in so doing.

Indeed there is no natural man but what deceives himself, if he thinks he is truly willing to perform external obedience to God, universally and perseveringly through the various trials of life. And therefore in promising it, he is either very deceitful, or is like the foolish deceived man that undertook to *build* when he had not wherewith to *finish*. And if it be known by the church, before whom he promises to *build* and *finish*, that at the same time he does not pretend to have an *heart* to finish, his promise is worthy of no credit or regard from them, and can make nothing *visible* to them but his presumption.

A great confirmation of what has been said under this head of covenanting, is Psal. l. 16. "But unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do, to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth?" This term, the wicked, in the more general use of it in Scripture, is applied in that extent as to include all ungodly or graceless persons, all that are under the reigning power of sin, and are the objects of God's anger, or exposed to his eternal vengeance; as might easily be made to appear by a particular enumeration of texts all over the Bible. All such are in Scripture called, *workers of iniquity*, *the children of the wicked one*, Matth. xiii. 38. All such are said to be *of the devil*, 1 John iii. 8. And to be *the children of the devil*, verse 10. *The righteous* and *the wicked* are, in a multitude of places in Scripture, evidently opposed one to the other, and distinguished as *saints* and *sinners*, *holy* and *unholy*, those that *fear God* and those *that fear him not*, those that *love him* and those that *hate him*. All mankind are in Scripture divided by these distinctions, and the Bible knows of no *neuters* or third sort.

Indeed those who are really wicked, may be visibly righteous, righteous in profession and outward appearance. But a sort of men who have no saving grace, and yet are not really wicked, the Scripture is entirely ignorant of. It is reasonable to suppose, that by *wicked men*, in this psalm, is meant all that *hate instruction*, and *reject God's word*, (Psalm l. 17,) and not merely such as are guilty of particular crimes mentioned, verse 17—20,

stealing, adultery, fraud, and backbiting. · Though only some particular ways of wickedness are mentioned, yet we are not to understand that all others are excluded; yea the words, in the conclusion of the paragraph, are expressly applied to all that forget God in such a manner as to expose themselves to be torn in pieces by God's wrath in hell, verse 22. "Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver." We can no more justly argue, that because some gross sins are here specified, that no sinners are meant but such as live in those or other gross sins, than we can argue from Rev. xxii. 14, 15, that none shall be shut out of heaven but those who have lived in the gross sins there mentioned; "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city: For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie." Nothing is more common in Scripture, than—in the descriptions it gives both of the godly and ungodly, together with their general character—to insert some particular excellent practices of the one to which grace tends, and some certain gross sins of the other for which there is a foundation in the reigning corruption of their hearts. So *lying* is mentioned as part of the character of all natural men, Psal. lviii. 3, 4, (there called *wicked men*, as in Psal l.) "The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies; their poison is like the poison of a serpent," &c. So it is said of the wicked, Psalm x. 2, 3, 4, 7. "His mouth is full of cursing and bitterness." This the apostle (Rom. iii.) cites as a description of all natural men. So it is said of the *wicked*, Psal. cxl. 3. "They have sharpened their tongues as a serpent; adders' poison is under their lips;" which the same apostle, in the same place, also cites as what is said of all natural men. The very same gross sins which are here mentioned in the fiftieth Psalm, are from time to time inserted in Solomon's descriptions of the *wicked man*, as opposed to the *righteous*, in the Book of Proverbs. Particularly, the sins mentioned in the 19th verse of that Psalm, "Thou givest thy mouth to evil, and thy tongue frameth deceit;" are thus mentioned, as belonging to the character of the *wicked man*, Prov. xii. 5, 6. "The thoughts of the *righteous* are right: but the counsels of the *wicked* are deceit. The words of the *wicked* are to lie in wait for blood; but the mouth of the *upright* shall deliver them." Nevertheless it is plain, that the wise man in this Book, in his distinction of the *righteous* and the *wicked*, means the same as *godly* and *ungodly*. Only reading the two foregoing chapters will be enough to satisfy any of this. Observe chap. x. 3, 7, 16, 20, 21, 24, 28—32, and xi. 3, 5, 9, 11, 18—23, 30, 31, besides innumerable other like texts all over the Book. In chap.

i. 16. it is said of sinners, "Their feet run to evil, and make haste to shed blood." This the apostle, in Rom. iii. 15. cites as belonging to the description of all natural men. So in the description of the wicked, Prov. iv. 14—19. it is said, that "they sleep not unless they have done mischief; that they drink the wine of violence," &c.; and yet by the wicked there is meant the same with the graceless man; as appears by the *antithesis* there made between him and the just, or righteous, whose path is as the shining light, that shineth more and more to the perfect day.

As a further evidence that by the wicked in Psal. l. 16. is meant the same as the ungodly or graceless, it is to be observed, here is a pretty manifest *antithesis*, or opposition between the wicked, and the saints, that shall be gathered to Christ at the day of judgment, verse 5. There God, speaking of his coming to judgment, says, "Gather my SAINTS together, those that have made a COVENANT with me by sacrifice:" And then, after shewing the insufficiency of the sacrifices of beasts, implying that it is a greater sacrifice by which these saints make a COVENANT with him, it is added, "But to the wicked [that are not in the number of my saints] "God doth say, What hast thou to do, to take my COVENANT into thy mouth?" Approving of the *covenanting* of the former, but disapproving the *covenanting* of the latter. As to the gathering of God's saints there mentioned, if we consider the foregoing and the following verses, it is evidently the same with the gathering of his elect, when Christ comes in the clouds of heaven, Matth. xxiv. 30, 31; and with the gathering of the righteous, as his wheat into his barn, at the day of judgment, Matth. xiii. And therefore there is as much reason to suppose, that by the wicked, which are opposed to them, is meant all graceless persons, as there is to understand the *doers of iniquity*, Matth. xiii. as opposed to the righteous, which shall then "shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father," verse 43.—And there is one thing more which still further confirms me in my construction of Psalm l. 16. which is, that the plain reason here given against wicked men taking God's covenant into their mouths, holds good with respect to all graceless men, viz. because they do not comply with, but reject the very covenant, which they with their mouths profess to own and consent to. Verse 17, "Seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee:" as much as to say, "thou rejectest and hast a reigning enmity against my statutes, with which thou declarest and professest a compliance." And this is the spirit and practice of all who live in the sin of unbelief and rejection of Christ; they live in a way that is altogether inconsistent with the covenant of grace; for against the sum and substance of the condition and engagement of that covenant every

natural man is under the reigning power of enmity, and lives in contradiction to it. Therefore, I think, it follows, that they who know it is thus with them, have *nothing to do to take God's covenant into their mouths.*

SECT. IV.

The nature of things seems to afford no good reason why the people of Christ should not openly profess a proper respect to him in their hearts, as well as a true notion of him in their heads, or a right opinion of him in their judgments, and this is confirmed by Scripture testimony.

I can conceive of nothing reasonably to be supposed as the design or end of a public profession of religion, that does not as much require a profession of honour, esteem, and friendship of heart towards Christ, as an orthodox opinion about him; or why the former should not be as much expected and required in order to be admitted into the company of his friends and followers, as the latter. It cannot be because the former in itself is not as important as the latter; seeing the very essence of religion itself consists in the former, and without it the latter is wholly vain, and makes us never the better; neither happier in ourselves, nor more acceptable to God.—One end of a public profession of religion is giving public honour to God. But surely the profession of inward esteem, and a supreme respect of heart towards God more directly tends to it, than the declaring of right speculative notions of him. We look upon it that our friends do the more especially and directly put honour upon us, when upon proper occasions they stand ready not only to own the truth of such and such facts concerning us, but also to testify their high esteem, and cordial and entire regard to us. When persons only manifest their doctrinal knowledge of religion, and express the assent of their judgments, but at the same time make no pretence but that they are wholly destitute of all true love to God, and are under the dominion of enmity against him, their profession is, in some respects, very greatly to God's dishonour: For they leave reason for the public greatly to suspect that they *hold the truth in unrighteousness*, and that they are some of those who have both seen and hated Christ and his Father, John xv. 24. Who of all persons have the greatest sin, and are most to God's dishonour.

I am at a loss, how that *visibility* of *saintship*, which the honoured author of *The Appeal to the Learned* supposes to be all that is required in order to admission to the Lord's supper, can be much to God's honour, viz. Such a visibility as leaves

reason to believe, that the greater part of those who have it, are enemies to God in their hearts, and inwardly the servants of sin. Such a visibility of religion as this, seems rather to increase a visibility of wickedness in the world, and so of God's dishonour, than any thing else; i. e. it makes more wickedness visible to the eye of a human judgment, and gives men reason to think there is more wickedness in the world than otherwise would be visible to them. Because we have reason to think, that those who live in a rejection of Christ, under the light of the gospel, and the knowledge and common belief of its doctrine, have vastly greater sin and guilt than other men. And that venerable divine himself did abundantly teach this.

Christ came into the world to engage in a war with God's enemies, *sin* and *Satan*; and a great war there is maintained between them; and the contest is, who shall have the possession of OUR HEARTS. Now it is reasonable, under these circumstances, that we should declare on whose side we are, whether on Christ's side, or on the side of his enemies. If we would be admitted among Christ's friends and followers, it is reasonable, that we should profess we are *on the Lord's side*, and that we yield OUR HEARTS to him, and not to his rivals. And this seems plainly to be the design and nature of a public profession of Christ. If *this* profession is not made, no profession is made that is worth regarding, in such a case as this, and to any such purpose as being admitted among his visible friends. There is no being on Christ's side, in this case, but with an *undivided heart* preferring him to all his rivals, and renouncing them all for his sake. The case admits of no neutrality, or lukewarmness, or a middle sort of persons with a moral sincerity, or such a common faith as is consistent with loving sin and the world better than Christ. *He that is not with me* (says Christ) *is against me.* And therefore none profess to be on Christ's side, but they who profess to renounce his rivals. For those who would be called Christians, to profess no higher regard to Christ than what will admit of a superior regard to the world, is more absurd than if a woman pretending to marry a man, and take him for her husband, should profess to take him in some sort, but yet not pretend to take him in such a manner as is inconsistent with her allowing other men a fuller possession of her, and greater intimacy with her, than she allows him. The nature of the case, as it stands between us and Jesus Christ, is such, that an open solemn profession of being entirely for him, and giving him the possession of our hearts, renouncing all competitors, is more requisite in this, than a like possession in any other case. The profession of an intermediate sort of state of our mind, is very disagreeable to the nature of Christ's work, and kingdom in the world, and all that belongs to the designs and ends of his admi-

nistrations: and for ministers and churches openly to establish such a profession of Christ as part of his public service, which does not imply more than lukewarmness, is, I fear, to make a mere sham of a solemn public profession of Christianity, and seems to be wholly without warrant from the word of God, and greatly to his dishonour.

It cannot be justly pretended as a reason why the *opinion concerning doctrines* should be professed, and not *friendship* or *respect of heart*, that the former is more *easily discerned* and known by us than the latter. For though it be true, that men may be at a loss concerning the latter, yet it is as true they may be so concerning the former too. They may be at a loss in many cases concerning the fulness of the determination of their own inclination and choice; and so they may concerning the fulness of the determination of their judgment. I know of nothing in human nature that hinders the acts of men's wills being properly subject to their own consciousness, any more than the acts of their judgment; nor of any reason to suppose that men may not discern their own *consent*, as well as their *assent*. The Scripture plainly supposes gracious dispositions and acts to be things properly under the eye of conscience: 2 Cor. xiii. 5. "Know ye not your own selves?" John xxi. 15. "Simon son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" and many other places. Nor is the nature of godliness less made known, than the true doctrines of religion. Piety of heart, in the more essential things belonging to it, is as clearly revealed, as the doctrines concerning the nature of God, the person of the Messiah, and the method of his redemption.

We find in Scripture, that all those of God's professing people or visible saints who are not *truly pious*, are represented as *counterfeits*, as having *guile*, *disguise*, and a *false appearance*, as making *false pretences*, and as being *deceitful* and *hypocrites*.—Thus Christ says of Nathanael, John i. 47. "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile;" that is, a truly gracious person; implying that those of God's professing people, who are not gracious, are *guileful*, and deceitful in their profession. So sinners in Zion, or in God's visible church, are called *hypocrites*. Isaiah xxxiii. 14. "The sinners in Zion are afraid, fearfulness hath surprised the *hypocrites*." Isaiah xi. 17. "Every one is an *hypocrite* and an evil-doer." So they are called *lying children*, Isaiah xxx. 9, and chap. lix. 13, and are represented as *lying*, in pretending to be of *the temple* or church of God. Jer. vii. 2, 4. "Hear the word of the Lord, all ye of Judah, that enter in at these gates to worship the Lord.—Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are these." These are spoken of as falsely calling themselves of the *holy city*,

Isaiah xlviii. 1, 2. They are called *silver-dross*, and *reprobate* or *refuse silver*. (Ezek. xxii. 18, Jer. vi. 30,) which glisters and shows like true silver, but has not its inward worth. So they are compared to *adulterated wine*, Isaiah i. 22; and to *trees* full of *leaves*, bidding fair for fruitfulness, Matth. xxi. 19. *Clouds* that look as if they were full of rain, yet bring nothing but *wind*, Jude 12. *Wells without water*, that do but cheat the thirsty traveller, 2 Pet. ii. 13. A deceitful bow, that appears good, but fails the archer, Psalm lxxviii. 57. Hos. vii. 15.—Mr. Stoddard, in his *Appeal to the Learned*, from time to time, supposes all *visible saints*, who are not truly pious, to be *hypocrites*, as in page 15, 17, 18.

Now what ground or reason can there be thus to represent those to be *visible saints*, or members of God's visible church, who are not *truly pious*, if the profession of such does not imply any pretence to *true piety;* and when they never made a pretence to any thing more than *common grace*, or *moral sincerity*, which many of them *truly have*, and therefore are not at all *hypocritical* or deceitful in their pretences, and are as much *without guile*, in what they make a profession of, as Nathanael was? The Psalmist, speaking of sincere piety, calls it *truth in the inward parts*. Psalm li. 6. "Behold thou desirest truth in the inward parts." It is called *truth* with reference to some *declaration* or *profession* made by God's visible people; but on the hypothesis which I oppose, *common grace* is as properly *truth in the inward parts*, in this respect, as saving grace. God says concerning Israel, Deut. xxxii. 5. "Their spot is not the spot of his children." God here speaks of himself, as it were, disappointed; the words having reference to some *profession* they had made. For why should the remark be made, after this manner, that *spots* appeared upon them, and showed marks that they were not his *children*, if they never *pretended* to be his children, and never were accepted under any such notion to any of the privileges of his people?

God is pleased to represent himself in his word as if he *trusted* the profession of his visible people, and as *disappointed* when they did not approve themselves as his faithful, steadfast, and thorough friends. Isaiah lxiii. 8, 9, 10. "For he said. Surely they are my people, children that will not lie. So he was their Saviour: In all their affliction he was afflicted. But they rebelled and vexed his Holy Spirit; therefore he was turned to be their enemy." The same is represented in many other places. I suppose that God speaks after this manner, because, in his present external dealings with his visible people, he does not act in the capacity of the Searcher of Hearts, but accommodates himself to their nature, and the present state and circumstances of his church, and speaks to them and treats them

after the manner of men, and deals with them in their own way.* But supposing the case to be even thus, there would be no ground for such representations, if there were no profession of true godliness. When God is represented as trusting that men will be his faithful friends, we must understand that he trusts to their pretences. But how improperly would the matter be so represented, if there were no pretences to trust to, no pretences of any real thorough friendship? However there may be a profession of some common affection that is morally sincere, yet there is no pretence of loving him more than, yea not so much as his enemies.—What reason to trust that they will be faithful to God as their master, when the religion they profess amounts to no more than serving two masters? What reason to trust that they will be stable in their ways, when they do not pretend to be of a single heart, and all know that the double-minded persons used to be unstable in all their ways? Those who only profess *moral sincerity* or common grace, do not pretend to love God above the world. And such grace is what God and man know is liable to *pass away as the early dew, and the morning cloud.*—If what men profess amounts to nothing beyond *lukewarmness*, it is not to be expected that they will be *faithful to the death.* If men do not pretend to have any oil in their vessels, what cause can there be to trust that their lamps will not go *out?* If they do not pretend to have any *root* in them, what cause is there for any disappointment when they wither away.

When God, in the forementioned place, Isa. lxiii. represents himself as trusting Israel's profession, and saying, *Surely they are my people, children that will not lie:* it cannot be understood, as if he trusted that they were *his people* in that sense, in which the ten tribes were called God's people after they had given up themselves to idolatry for two or three hundred years together without once repenting. But, *surely they are my sincere saints and children*, as they profess to be, Israelites indeed, without guile; they would not do so evil a thing as to make a *lying profession.* This seems to be the plain import of the words. It therefore shews that the profession they made was of real vital godliness.

The eight first verses of the fifty-sixth chapter of Isaiah, I think, afford good evidence, that such qualifications are requisite in order to the privileges of a visible church state, as I have insisted on.—In the four preceding chapters we have a prophecy of gospel-times, the blessed state of things which the Messiah should introduce. The prophecy of the same times is continued in the

* This distinction is too vague. A more satisfactory reason is, that the very nature of *moral government* requires this mode of treatment. See "An Essay on Equity and Sovereignty" throughout.—W.

former part of this chapter. Here we have a prophecy of the abolishing of the *ceremonial law*, which was a *wall of separation*, that kept two sorts of persons (viz. eunuchs and Gentiles) out from the ordinances of the church or congregation of the Lord (for the words *congregation* and *church* are the same,) the place of whose meeting was *in God's house within God's walls*, ver. 5. and *on God's holy mountain*, ver. 7. That in the ceremonial law which especially kept out the Gentiles, was the law of circumcision; and the law that the eunuch shall not enter into the congregation or church of the Lord, we have in Deut. xxiii. 1. Now here it is foretold, that in the days when "God's salvation shall be come, and his righteousness revealed," by the coming of the Messiah, this wall of separation should be broken down, this ceremonial law removed out of the way, (but still taking care to note, that the law of the Sabbath shall be continued, as not being one of those ceremonial observances which shall be abolished;) and then it is declared, what is the great qualification which should be looked at in those blessed days, when these external ceremonial qualifications of circumcision and soundness of body should no more be insisted on, viz. piety of heart and practice, "joining themselves to the Lord, loving the name of the Lord, to be his servants, choosing the things that please him," &c. Ver. 3, &c. "Neither let the son of the stranger that hath joined himself to the Lord, speak, saying, The Lord hath utterly separated me from his people; neither let the eunuch say, Behold, I am a dry tree; for thus saith the Lord unto the eunuchs that keep my Sabbaths, and choose the things that please me, and take hold of my covenant, even unto them will I give in my house, and within my walls, a place, and a name better than of sons and of daughters; I will give unto them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off. Also the sons of the stranger that join themselves to the Lord, to serve him, and to love the name of the Lord, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant: Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt-offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar: For mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people. The Lord God which gathered the outcasts of Israel, saith, Yet will I gather others to him besides those that are gathered unto him."

SECT. V.

The representations which Christ makes of his visible church, from time to time, in his discourses and parables, make the thing manifest which I have laid down.

This is required by the representation which Christ makes in the latter end of Matthew vii. of the final issue of things with respect to the different sorts of members of his visible church. Those that only say, *Lord, Lord*, and those who *do the will of his Father which is in heaven; those who build their house upon a rock*, and *those who build upon the sand.* They are all (of both kinds) evidently such as have pretended to an high honour and regard to Christ, have claimed an interest in him, and accordingly hoped to be finally acknowledged and received as his. Those visible Christians who are not true Christians cry, *Lord, Lord;* that is, are forward to profess respect, and claim relation to him, and will be greatly disappointed hereafter in not being owned by him. They shall then come and cry, *Lord, Lord.* This compellation, *Lord*, is commonly given to Jesus Christ in the New Testament, as signifying the special relation which Christ stood in to his disciples, rather than his universal dominion. They shall then come and earnestly claim relation, as it is represented of Israel of old, in the day of their distress, and God's awful judgments upon them, Hos. viii. 2. "Israel shall cry unto me, My God, we know thee." To *know* does not here intend speculative knowledge, but knowing as one *knows his own*, with a peculiar respect and interest. These false disciples shall not only claim interest in Christ, but shall plead and bring arguments to confirm their claim; "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name have cast out devils, and in thy name have done many wonderful works?" It is evidently the language of those that are dreadfully disappointed. *Then* (says Christ) *I will profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me ye that work iniquity: q. d.* "Though they profess a relation to me, I will profess none to them; though they plead that they know me, and have an interest in me, I will declare to them that I never owned them as any of mine; and will bid them depart from me as those that I will never own, nor have any thing to do with in such a relation as they claim." Thus all the hopes they had lived in, of being hereafter received and owned by Christ as in the number of his friends and favourites, are dashed in pieces.——This is further illustrated by what follows, in the comparison of the wise man who built his

house on a rock; representing those professed disciples who build their hope of an interest in him on a sure foundation whose house shall stand in the trying day, and the foolish man who built his house on the sand; representing those professed disciples or hearers of his word, who build their opinion and hope of an interest in him on a false foundation, whose house in the great time of trial shall have a dreadful fall, their vain hope shall issue in dismal disappointment and confusion.

On the whole, it is manifest that all visible Christians or saints, all Christs's professing disciples or hearers that profess him to be their Lord, according to the Scripture notion of professing Christ, are such as profess a "saving interest in him and relation to him, and live in the hope of being hereafter owned as those that are so interested and related."—By *those that hear Christ's sayings*, in this place, are not meant merely auditors of the word preached; for there are many such who make no pretence to an interest in Christ, and have no such hope or opinion built on any foundation at all; but those who profess to hearken, believe, and yield submission to the word of Christ. This is confirmed by the manner in which the matter is expressed in Luke vi. "Whosoever cometh to me and heareth my sayings, and doth them, I will shew you to whom he is like:" *i. e.* Whosoever visibly comes to me, and is one of my professed disciples, &c.

This matter is confirmed by that parallel representation that Christ gives us in Luke xiii. 25—29, of his final disposal of the two different sorts of persons that are in the kingdom or church of God; viz. those who shall be allowed in his church or kingdom when it comes to its state of glory, and those who though they have visibly been in it, shall be thrust out of it. It is represented of the latter, that they shall then come and claim relation and interest, and cry, "Lord, Lord, open to us;" and "Christ shall answer and say, I know you not whence ye are." As much as to say, "Why do you claim relation and acquaintance with me? You are strangers to me, I do not own you." "Then (it is said) they shall begin to say, We have eaten and drank in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets." As much as to say, "This is a strange thing, that thou dost not own us! We are exceedingly surprised, that thou shouldest account us as strangers that have no part in thee, when we have eaten and drank in thy presence," &c. And when he shall finally insist upon it, that he does not own them, and will have nothing to do with them as his, "then there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth;" then they shall be filled with dismal disappointment, confusion and despair, when they shall see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, with whom they expected to dwell for ever there, and they themselves thrust

out. By this it is evident, that those visible members of the kingdom of God, that hereafter shall be cast out of it, are such as look upon themselves now interested in Christ and the eternal blessings of his kingdom, and make that profession.

The same is manifest by the parable of the ten virgins, Matt. xxv. In the first verse it is said, *The kingdom of heaven* (i. e. the church of Christ) is *likened unto ten virgins.* The two sorts of virgins evidently represent the two sorts of members of the visible church of Christ; the wise, those who are true Christians; and the foolish, those who are apparent, but not true Christians. The foolish virgins were to all appearance the children of the bride-chamber; such as had accepted of the invitation to the wedding, which represents the invitations of the gospel, wherein the bridegroom and bride say, *Come.* They herein had testified the same respect to the bridegroom and bride that the wise had. The parable naturally leads us to suppose, that they were to appearance every way of the same society with the wise, pretended to be the same sort of persons, in like manner interested in the bridegroom, and that they were received by the wise under such a notion. They made a profession of the very same kind of honour and regard to the bridegroom, in going forth to meet him with their lamps, as his friends to show him respect, and had the same hopes of enjoying the privileges and entertainments of the wedding: there was a difference with respect to oil in their vessels, but their was no difference with respect to their lamps. One thing intended by their lamps, as I suppose is agreed by all, is their profession. This is the same in both; and in both it is a profession of grace, as a lamp (from its known end and use) is a manifestation or show of oil. Another thing signified by the blaze of their lamps seems to be the light of hope. Their lamps signify in general the appearance of grace or godliness, including both the appearance of it to the view or judgment of others, and also to their own view, and the judgment they entertain of themselves. Their lamps shone, not only in the eyes of others, but also in their own eyes. This is confirmed, because on hearing the midnight-cry, they find their *lamps are gone out;* which seems most naturally to represent, that however hypocrites may maintain their hopes while they live, and while their Judge is at a distance, yet when they come to be alarmed by the sound of the last trumpet, their hopes will immediately expire and vanish away, and very often fail them in the sensible approaches of death. *Where is the hope of the hypocrite, when God takes away his soul?* But till the midnight-cry the foolish virgins seem to entertain the same hopes with the wise. When they first went forth with the wise virgins, their lamps shone in their own eyes, and in the eyes of

others, in like manner, with the lamps of the wise virgins.—So that by this parable it also appears, that all visible members of the Christian church, or kingdom of heaven, are those that profess to be gracious persons, as looking on themselves, and at least pretending to be such.

And that true piety is what persons ought to look at in themselves as the qualification that is proper in coming into the visible church of Christ, and taking the privileges of its members, I think, is evident also from the parable of the *marriage*, which the king made for his son, Matt. xxii. particularly the 11th and 12th verses. "And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding-garment: and he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having on a wedding-garment? And he was speechless."—Mr. Stoddard says, (*Appeal*, page 4, 5,) "Here is a representation of the day of judgment; and such persons as come for salvation without a *wedding-garment* shall be rejected in that day. So that here being nothing said about the *Lord's supper*, all arguing from this Scripture falls to the ground." Upon which I take leave to observe, that the king's coming in to see the guests, means Christ's visiting his professing church at the day of judgment, I make no doubt; but, that the guests coming into the king's house means persons coming for salvation at the day of judgment, I am not convinced. If it may properly be represented, that any reprobates will come for salvation at the day of judgment, they will not do so *before* the king appears; but Christ will appear *first*, and *then* they will come and cry to him for salvation.—Whereas, in this parable, the guests are represented as gathered together in the king's house before the king appears, and the king as coming in and finding them there; where they had entered while the day of grace lasted, while the door was kept open, and invitations given forth; and not like those who come for salvation at the day of judgment, Luke xiii. 25, who come "after the door is shut, and stand without, knocking at the door." I think it is apparent beyond all contradiction, that by the guests coming into the king's house at the invitation of the servants, is intended Jews and Gentiles coming into the *Christian church*, at the preaching of Christ's apostles and others, making profession of godliness, and expecting to partake of the eternal marriage-supper. I showed before, that what is called the house of God in the New Testament, is his church. In this parable, the king first sends forth his servants to *call them that were bidden*, and they would not come; and they having repeatedly rejected the invitation, and evil entreated the servants, the king sent forth his armies and burnt up their city: representing the Jews being first invited, and rejecting the

invitations of the gospel, and persecuting Christ's ministers, and so provoking God to give up Jerusalem and the nation to destruction. Then the king sends forth his servants into the *high-ways*, to call in all sorts; upon which many flocked into the king's house: hereby most plainly representing the preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, and their flocking into the *Christian church*. This gathering of the Gentiles into the king's house, is BEFORE the day of judgment, and the man without the wedding-garment among them. It fitly represents the resorting that should be to the Christian church, during the day of grace, through all ages; but by no means signifies men's coming for salvation *after* the day of grace is at an end, at Christ's appearing in the clouds of heaven. Let this parable be compared with that parallel place, Luke xiv. 16—24. The company gathered to the marriage in this parable, plainly represents the same thing with the company of virgins gathered to the marriage in the other parable, Mat. xxv. viz. the company of visible saints, or the company belonging to the visible kingdom of heaven; and therefore both parables are introduced alike with these words, "The kingdom of heaven is like unto," &c. As to the man's being cast out of the king's house when the *king comes in to see his guests*, it is agreeable to other representations made of false Christians being thrust out of God's kingdom at the day of judgment; the "servant's not abiding in the house for ever, though the son abideth ever;" God's "taking away their part out of the holy city, and blotting their names out of the book of life," &c.

Mr. Stoddard says, "This person that had not a *wedding-garment*, was a *reprobate;* but every one that partakes of the Lord's supper without grace is not a reprobate." I answer, all that will be found in the king's house without grace *when the king comes in to see the guests*, are doubtless reprobates.

If it be questioned, whether by the *wedding-garment* be meant true piety, or whether hereby is not intended *moral sincerity*, let the Scripture interpret itself; which elsewhere tells us plainly what the wedding-garment is at the marriage of the Son of God: Rev. xix. 7, 8. "The marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints." None, I suppose, will say, this righteousnes that is so pure, is the common grace of lukewarm professors, and those that go about to serve God and mammon. The same wedding-garment we have an account of in Psal. xlv. 13, 14. "The king's daughter is all glorious within, her clothing is of wrought gold: she shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needle-work." But we need go no where else but to the parable itself; that alone

determines the matter. The wedding-garment spoken of as that without which professors will be excluded from among God's people at the day of judgment, is not *moral sincerity*, or common grace, but special saving grace. If common grace were the wedding-garment intended, not only would the king cast out those whom he found *without* a wedding-garment, but also many *with* a wedding-garment: for all such as shall be found then with no better garment than *moral sincerity*, will be bound hand and foot, and cast into outer darkness: such a wedding garment as this will not save them. So that true piety, unfeigned faith, or the righteousness of Christ which is upon every one that believeth, is doubtless the wedding-garment intended. But if a person has good and proper ground to proceed on in *coming into the king's house*, that knows he is *without* this wedding-garment, why should the king upbraid him, saying, "How camest thou in hither, not having a wedding-garment?" And why should he be speechless, when asked such a question? Would he not have had a good answer to make? viz. "Thou thyself hast given me leave to come in hither, *without a wedding-garment.*" Or this, "Thy own word is my warrant; which invited such as had only common grace or *moral sincerity* to come in."

SECT. VI.

What took place, in fact, in the manner and circumstances of the admission of members into the primitive Christian church, and the profession they made in order to their admission, as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, will further confirm the point.

We have an account, concerning these, of their being first awakened by the preaching of the apostles and other ministers, and earnestly inquiring *what they should do to be saved;* and of their being directed to *repent and believe on the Lord Jesus*, as the way to have their sins blotted out, and to be saved; and then, upon their *professing* that they did believe, of their being baptized and admitted into the Christian church. Now can any reasonably imagine, that these primitive converts, when they made that profession in order to their admission, had any such *distinction* in view as that which some now make, of *two sorts* of real Christianity, two sorts of sincere faith and repentance, one with a *moral* and another with a *gracious* sincerity? Or, that the apostles, who disciplined them and baptized them, had instructed them in any such distinction? The history informs us of their

teaching them but *one* faith and repentance; *Believing in Christ that they might be saved*, and *repentance for the remission of sins:* and it would be unreasonable to suppose, that a thought of any lower or other kind entered into the heads of these converts, when immediately upon their receiving such instructions they professed *faith* and *repentance;* or that those who admitted them understood them as meaning any other but what they professed.

Let us particularly consider what we are informed concerning those multitudes, whose admission we have an account of in Acts ii. We are told concerning the three thousand first converts, that they were greatly awakened by the preaching of the apostles, *pricked in their hearts*, made sensible of their guilt and misery; *and said to Peter, and the rest of the apostles, men and brethren, what shall we do? i. e.* What shall we do to be *saved*, and that our *sins may be remitted?* Upon which they directed them what they should do, viz. *Repent and be baptized, in the name of the Lord Jesus, for the remission of sins.* They are here directed into the way of salvation, viz. Faith and repentance, with a proper profession of these.—*Then*, we are told, that *they which gladly received the word were baptized;* that is, they which appeared gladly to receive the word, or manifested and professed a cordial and cheerful compliance with the calls of the word, with the directions which the apostles had given them. The manifestation was doubtless by some profession, and the profession was of *that repentance for the remission of sins*, and *that faith in Christ*, which the apostles had directed them to, in answer to their inquiry, *what they should do to be saved?* I can see no ground to suppose they thought of any lower or other kind. And it is evident by what follows, that these converts now looked upon it that they had complied with these directions, and so were at peace with God. Their business now is to rejoice and praise God from day to day; "they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship——continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God." The account of them now is not as of persons under awakenings, weary and heavy-laden sinners, under an awful sense of guilt and wrath, *pricked in their hearts*, as before; but of persons whose sorrow was turned into joy, looking on themselves as now in a good estate. And in the last verse it is said, "The Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved;" in the original it is τους σωζομενες, *the saved;* οι σωζομενοι was a common appellation given to all visible Christians, or to all members of the visible Christian church. It is as much as to say, *the converted*, or *the regenerate.* Being converted is in Scrip-

ture called being saved, because it is so in effect; they were "passed from death to life," John v. 24. Tit. i. 4. "According to his mercy he SAVED us, by the washing of REGENERATION, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." 2 Tim. i. 9. "Who hath SAVED us, and called us with an holy calling." Not that all who were added to the visible church were indeed regenerated, but they were so in profession and repute, and therefore were so in name. 1 Cor. i. 18. "The preaching of the cross is to them that perish, foolishness; but unto us [*i. e.* us Christians] which are SAVED, [τοις σωζομενοις] it is the power of God." So those that from time to time were added to the primitive church, were all called οι σωζομενοι, *the saved.* Before, while under awakenings, they used to inquire of their teachers, what they should do to be saved; and the directions that used to be given them, were to *repent* and *believe in Christ*, and before they were admitted into the church, they professed that they did so; and thenceforward, having visibly complied with the terms proposed, they were called THE SAVED; it being supposed that, they now had obtained what they inquired after when they asked what they should do to be saved. Accordingly we find that Christ's ministers treated them no more as miserable perishing sinners, but as true converts; not setting before them their sin and misery to awaken them, and to convince them of the necessity of a Saviour, exhorting them to fly from the wrath to come, and seek conversion to God; but exhorting them to *hold fast the profession of their faith, to continue in the grace of God*, and persevere in holiness; endeavouring by all means to confirm and strengthen them in grace. Thus when a great number believed and turned to the Lord at Antioch, Barnabas was sent to them; "who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they should cleave to the Lord." Acts xi. 23; see also Acts xiii. 43. and xiv. 22. and xv. 32, 41. and xx. 32. And when the apostles heard of the conversion of the Gentiles to the Christian faith, visible by their profession when they joined themselves to the Christian church, they supposed and believed that God had given them saving repentance, and an heart-purifying faith. Acts xi. 18. "When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also granted unto the Gentiles REPENTANCE unto LIFE." Chap. xv. 9. "And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by FAITH."

If any should here object, that when such multitudes were converted from Judaism and Heathenism, and received into the Christian church in so short a season, it was impossible there should be *time* for each one to say so much in his public

profession, as to be any credible exhibition of true godliness to the church: I answer, this objection will soon vanish, if we particularly consider how the case was with those primitive converts, and how they were dealt with by their teachers. It was apparently the manner of the first preachers of the gospel, when their hearers were awakened, and brought in good earnest to inquire what they should do to be saved, then particularly to instruct them in the way of salvation, and explain to them what qualifications must be in them, or what they must do in order to their being saved, agreeable to Christ's direction, Mark xvi. 15, 16. This we find was the method they took with the *three thousand*, in the second chapter of Acts, ver. 37—40. And it seems, they were particular and full in it: they said much more to them than the words recorded. It is said, ver. 40, "With many other words did Peter testify and exhort." And this we find to be the course Paul and Silas took with the jailer, chap. xvi. Who also gave more large and full instructions than are rehearsed in the history. And when they had thus instructed them, they doubtless saw to it, either by themselves or some others who assisted them, that their instructions were *understood* by them, before they proceeded to baptize them. For I suppose, none with whom I have to do in this controversy, will maintain, from the apostles' example, that we ought not to insist on a good degree of doctrinal knowledge in the way and terms of salvation, as requisite to the admission of members into the church. And after they were satisfied that they well understood these things, it took up no great time to make a profession of them, or to declare that they did or found in themselves, those things they had been told of as necessary to their salvation. After they had been well informed what saving faith and repentance were, it took up no more time to profess *that* faith and repentance, than any other.—In this case not only the converts' words, but the words of the preacher, which they consented to, and in effect made their own, are to be taken into their profession. For persons that are known to be of an honest character, and manifestly qualified with good doctrinal knowledge of the nature of true godliness, in the more essential things which belong to it, solemnly to profess they have or do those things, is to make as credible a profession of godliness as I insist upon. And we may also well suppose, that more words were uttered by the professors, and with other circumstances to make them credible, than are recorded in that very brief history, which we have of the primitive church in the Acts of the Apostles; and also we may yet suppose one thing further, viz. that in that extraordinary state of things so particular a profession was not requisite in order to the church's satisfaction, either of doctrines *assented*

to, or of the *consent* and disposition of the heart, as may be expedient in a more ordinary state of things; for various reasons that might be given, would it not too much lengthen out this discourse.

One thing which makes it very evident, that the inspired ministers of the primitive Christian church looked upon *saving faith* as the proper matter of the profession requisite in order to admission into the church, is the story of Philip and the eunuch, in Acts viii. For when the eunuch desires to be baptized, Philip makes answer, ver. 37. "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest." Which words certainly imply, that *believing with all his heart* was requisite in order to his coming to this ordinance properly and in a due manner. I cannot conceive what should move Philip to utter these words, or what he should aim at in them, if at the same time he supposed, that the eunuch had no need to look at any such qualification in himself, or at all to inquire whether he had such a faith, in order to determine whether he might present himself as the subject of *baptism*.

It is said by some, that Philip intended nothing more by *believing with all his heart*, than that he believed that doctrine, that *Jesus Christ was the Son of God*, with a *moral sincerity* of persuasion. But here again I desire that the scripture may be allowed to be its own interpreter. The scripture very much abounds with such phrases as this, *with all the heart*, or *with the whole heart*, in speaking of religious matters. And the manifest intent of them is to signify a gracious simplicity and godly sincerity. Thus, 1 Sam. xii. 20. "Turn not aside from following the Lord, but serve the Lord with all your heart." So ver. 24. "Only fear the Lord, and serve him in truth, with all your heart." 1 Kings viii. 23. "Who keepest covenant and mercy with thy servants, that walk before thee with all their heart." Chap. xiv. 8. "My servant David, who kept my commandments, and who followed me with all his heart." 2 Kings x. 31. "But Jehu took no heed to walk in the law of the Lord God of Israel with all his heart." 2 Chron. xxii. 9. "Jehoshaphat sought the Lord with all his heart." Chap. xxxi. 20, 21. "Hezekiah wrought that which was good and right and truth before the Lord his God; and in every work that he began in the service of the house of God, and in the law, and in the commandments, to seek his God, he did it with all his heart." Psal. ix. 1. "I will praise thee, O Lord, with my whole heart." Psal. lxxxvi. 12. "I will praise thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart, and will glorify thy name." Psal. cxi. 1. "I will praise thee, O Lord, with my whole heart, in the assembly of the upright." And cxix. 2. "Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the

whole heart." Ver. 10. "With my whole heart have I sought thee." Ver. 34. "Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law, yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart." Ver. 69. "The proud have forged a lie against me, but I will keep thy precepts with my whole heart." Jer. xxiv. 7. "And I will give them an heart to know me—for they shall return unto me with their whole heart." Joel ii. 12, 13. "Turn ye even unto me with all your heart—and rend your heart, and not your garments." And we have the like phrases in innumerable other places. And I suppose that not so much as one place can be produced, wherein there is the least evidence or appearance of their being used to signify any thing but a *gracious sincerity*. And indeed it must be a very improper use of language, to speak of those as performing acts of religion *with all their hearts*, whose heart the Scriptures abundantly represent as under the reigning power of sin and unbelief—and as those that do not give God their hearts, but give them to other things—as those who go about to *serve two masters*, and who *draw near to God with their lips*, but have at the same time their hearts *far from him*, running more after other things; and who have not a single eye, nor single heart. The word *believe*, in the New Testament, answers to the word *trust* in the Old; and therefore the phrase used by Philip, of *believing with all the heart*, is parallel to that in Prov. iii. "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart." And believing with the heart is a phrase used in the New Testament, to signify saving faith. Rom. x. 9, 10. "If thou shalt believe in thine heart, that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved; for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness." The same is signified by obeying the form of doctrine from the heart, Rom. vi. 17, 18. "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you; being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness." Here it is manifest, that saving faith is intended by obeying the form of doctrine from the heart. And the same is signified as if it had been said, "ye have believed with the heart" the form of doctrine. But Philip uses a yet stronger expression; he does not only say, if thou believest with the heart, or from the heart, but with ALL thine heart. Besides, for any to suppose, that those same persons which the scriptures represent in some places as under the power of an evil heart of unbelief—as double-minded with regard to their faith, (James i. 6, 7, 8,) who, though they *believe for awhile*, have their hearts like a *rock*, in which faith has no *root*, (Luke viii.)—and yet that this same sort of persons are in other scriptures spoken of *as believing with all their heart;* I say, for any to suppose this, would be to make the voice of

God's word not very harmonious and consonant to itself.—And one thing more I would observe on this head; there is good reason to suppose that Philip, while he sat in the chariot with the eunuch, and (as we are told) *preached unto him Jesus*, had showed to him the way of salvation—had opened to him the way of getting an interest in Christ, or obtaining salvation by him, viz. *believing in him*, agreeable to Christ's own direction, Mark xvi. 15, 16, and agreeable to what we find to be the manner of the first preachers of the gospel. And therefore, when after this discourse he puts it to the eunuch, whether he *believed with all his heart;* it is natural to suppose, that he meant whether he found his *heart* acquiescing in the gospel-way of salvation, or whether he sincerely exercised that *belief in Christ* which he had been inculcating; and it would be natural for the eunuch so to understand him.

Here, if it be objected, that the eunuch's answer and the profession he hereupon made, (wherein he speaks nothing of his *heart*, but barely says,) *I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God*, shows that he understood no more by the inquiry, than whether he gave his *assent* to that *doctrine:* to this I answer; we must take this confession of the eunuch together with Philip's words, to which they were a reply, and expound the one by the other. Nor is there any reason but to understand it in the same sense in which we find the words of the like confession elsewhere in the New Testament, and as the words of such a confession were wont to be used in those days; as particularly the words of Peter's confession, Matt. xvi. 16. "And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Which was a profession of saving faith, as appears by what Christ says upon it. And we read, 1 Cor. xii. 3. "No man can say, that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." Not but that a man might make a profession in these words without the Holy Ghost, but he could not do it heartily, or *WITH ALL HIS HEART.* So 1 John iv. 15. "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God:" *i. e.* Whoever makes this Christian confession (this profession which all Christians were wont to make) cordially, or *with his whole heart*, God dwells in him, &c. But it was *thus* that the eunuch was put upon making this confession.

SECT. VII.

The Epistles of the Apostles to the Churches, prove what has been asserted.

It is apparent by the epistles of the apostles to the primitive *Christian churches*, their *manner of addressing and treating* them throughout all those epistles, and what they say *to* them and *of* them, that all those churches were *constituted* of members so *qualified* as has been represented, having such a *visibility* of *godliness* as has been insisted upon. Those who were reputed to be *real saints*, were taken into the church under a *notion* of their being truly pious persons, made that *profession*, and had this *hope* of themselves; and that *natural* and *graceless* men were not admitted designedly, but *unawares*, and beside the aim of the primitive churches and ministers; and that such as remained in good standing, and free from an offensive behaviour, continued to have the reputation and esteem of real saints, with the apostles, and one with another.

There were numbers indeed in these churches, who after their admission fell into an offensive behaviour; of some of whom the apostles in their epistles speak doubtfully; others that had behaved themselves very scandalously, they speak of in language that seems to suppose them to be wicked men.—The apostle Paul, in his epistles to the Corinthians, oftentimes speaks of some among them that had embraced heretical opinions, and had behaved themselves in a very disorderly and schismatical manner, whom he represents as exposed to censure, and to whom he threatens excommunication. On occasion of so many offences of this kind appearing among them that for awhile had been thought well of, he puts them all upon *examining* themselves, whether they were indeed *in the faith*, and whether *Christ* was truly *in them*, as they and others had supposed, 2 Cor. xiii. —And the same apostle speaks of great numbers among the Galatians, who had made a high profession, and were such as he had thought well of when they were first admitted into the church, but since had given him cause to *doubt* of their state, by giving heed to seducers, that denied the great gospel-doctrine of *justification by faith alone*: Yet notwithstanding, the apostle speaks of them in such language as shows surprise and disappointment, and implies that he had looked upon them as true Christians, and hoped that his labours among them had had a saving effect upon them. Gal. i. 6. "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ,

unto another gospel." Chap. iv. 11. " I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain." And verse 20, " I desire to be present with you now, and change my voice; for I stand in doubt of you." As much as to say, " I have heretofore addressed you with the voice of love and charity, as supposing you the dear children of God; but now I begin to think of speaking to you in other language." In the same chapter, to show them what little reason he had to expect that they would come to this, he puts them in mind of the *great profession* they had made, and the extraordinary appearances there had formerly been in them of fervent piety.—Ver. 15. " Where is the blessedness you spake of? For I bear you record, that if it had been possible, you would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them unto me." The apostle James, in his epistle, speaks of scandalous persons among the *twelve tribes that were scattered abroad;* some that were men of *unbridled tongues;* some that seem to have been a kind of Antinomians in their principles, and of a very bitter and violent spirit, that reproached, condemned, and *cursed* their brethren, and raised *wars* and *fightings* among professing Christians, and were also very unclean in their practice, *adulterers* and *adulteresses*, chap. iv. 4. And in the fifth chapter of his epistle, he seems to speak to the unbelieving Jews, who persecuted the Christians, ver. 6. —And the apostles also often speak of some who had once been admitted into the church, *crept in unawares*, but who apostatized from Christianity, and finally proved notoriously wicked men.——But otherwise, and as to such members of the visible church as continued in the same good standing and visibility of Christianity, wherein they were admitted, it is evident by the epistles of the apostles, they were all in the eye of a Christian judgment *truly pious* or *gracious* persons. And here I desire the following things may be particularly observed.

The apostles continually, in their epistles, speak to them and of them, as supposing and judging them to be gracious persons. Thus the apostle Paul, in his epistle to the Romans, chap. i. 7, speaks of the members of that church as *beloved of God.* In chap. vi. 17, 18, &c. he " thanks God, that they had obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which had been delivered them,—were made free from sin, and become the servants of righteousness," &c. The apostle in giving thanks to God for this, must not only have a kind of *negative charity* for them, as not knowing but that they were gracious persons, and so *charitably hoping* (as we say) that it was so; but he seems to have formed a *positive judgment* that they were such. His thanksgiving must at least be founded on rational probability; since it would be but a mocking of God to give him *thanks* for bestowing a mercy, which at the same time he did not see reason posi-

tively to believe was bestowed. In chap. vii. 4—6, the apostle speaks of them as those that once *were in the flesh*, and *were under the law*, but now *delivered from the law, and dead to it.* In chap. viii. 15, and following verses, he tells them, *they had received the spirit of adoption*, and speaks of them as *having the witness of the Spirit that they were the children of God, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ.* And the whole of his discourse, to the end of the chapter, implies, that he esteemed them truly gracious persons. In chap. ix. 23, 24, he speaks of the Christian Romans, together with all other Christians, both Jews and Gentiles, as *vessels of mercy.* In chap. xiv. 6, 7, 8, speaking of the difference that then was among professing Christians, in point of regard to the ceremonial institutions of the law, he speaks of both parties as acting from a gracious principle, and as those that lived to the Lord, and should die unto the Lord; "He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord, &c. For none of us liveth to himself, and no man [i. e. *none of us*] dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord, or whether we die, we die unto the Lord: Whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord's." In chap. xv. 14, he says, "I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye are full of goodness." His being thus persuaded implies a positive judgment of charity.

And the same apostle in his first epistle to the Corinthians, directs it "to the church at Corinth, that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call on the name of the Lord Jesus;" *i. e.* to all visible Christians through the world, or all the members of Christ's visible church every where. And continuing his speech, chap. i. 8, he speaks of them as those "that God would confirm to the end, that they may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ:" plainly speaking of them all as persons, in Christian esteem, savingly converted. In the next verse, he speaks of the *faithfulness of God* as engaged thus to preserve them to salvation, *having called them to the fellowship of his Son.* And in the 30th verse, he speaks of them as having a saving interest in Christ; "Of him are ye in Christ Jesus; who of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." In chap. iii. 21—23, he says to the members of the church of Corinth, "All things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours, and ye are Christ's." In chap. iv. 15, he tells them, *he had begotten them through the gospel.* In chap. vi. 1—3, he speaks of them as "those who shall judge the world, and shall judge angels." And in verse 11, he says to them, "Ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of God." And in chap. xv. 49

to the end, he speaks of them as having an interest, with him and other Christians, in the happiness and glory of the *resurrection of the just.* And in his second epistle, chap. i. 7, he says to them, "Our hope of you is steadfast; knowing that as you are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation." This steadfast hope implies a positive judgment. We must here understand the apostle to speak of such members of the church of Corinth, as had not visibly backslidden. Again, in the 14th and 15th verses, he speaks of a *confidence* which he had, that they *should be his rejoicing in the day of the Lord Jesus.* In all reason we must conclude, there was a visibility of grace, carrying with it an apparent probability in the eyes of the apostle, which was the ground of this his confidence. Such an apparent probability, and his confidence as built upon it, are both expressed in chap. iii. 3, 4. "Ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ, ministered by us; written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in the fleshly tables of the heart; and such trust have we through Christ to God-ward." And in ver. 18, the apostle speaks of them, with himself and other Christians, as *all with open face, beholding as in a glass, the glory of the Lord,* and *being changed into the same image, from glory to glory.*

And in the epistle to the churches of Galatia, chap. iv. 26, the apostle speaks of visible Christians, as visibly belonging to heaven, the Jerusalem *which is above.* And ver. 28, 29, represents them to be the *children of the promise, as Isaac was;* and *born after the Spirit.* In the 6th verse of the same chapter, he says to the Christian Galatians, *Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.* And in chap. vi. 1, he speaks of those of them that had not fallen into scandal, as *spiritual persons.*

In his epistle to that great church at Ephesus, he *blesses God* on behalf of its members, as being, together with himself and all *the faithful in Christ Jesus,* "chosen in him before the foundation of the world, to be holy and without blame before him in love, being predestinated to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein God had made them accepted in the beloved: in whom they had redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins." In chap. i. 13, 14, he thus writes to them, "In whom ye also trusted—in whom after ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession." And in chap. ii. at the beginning; "You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins." With much more, showing that they were, in a charitable esteem, regenerated persons, and heirs of salvation.

So in the epistle to the church at Philippi, the apostle tells them, that he "thanks God upon every remembrance of them, for their fellowship in the gospel; being confident of this very thing, that he which had begun a good work in them, would perform it until the day of Christ: Even (*says he*) as it is meet for me to think this of you all." If it was meet for him to think this of them, and to be confident of it, he had at least some appearing rational probability to found his judgment and confidence upon; for surely it is not *meet* for reasonable creatures to think at random, and be confident without reason. In ver. 25, 26, he speaks of his "confidence that he should come to them for their furtherance and joy of faith, that their rejoicing might be more abundant in Christ Jesus." Which words certainly suppose that they were persons who had already received Christ, and comfort in him; had already obtained faith and joy in Christ, and only needed to have it increased.

In the epistle to the members of the church at Colosse, the apostle saluting them in the beginning of the epistle, "gives thanks for their faith in Christ Jesus, and love to all saints, and the hope laid up for them in heaven;" and speaks of "the gospel bringing forth fruit in them, since the day they knew the grace of God in truth," i. e. since the day of their saving conversion. In chap. i. 8, he speaks of "their love in the Spirit;" and ver. 12—14, as made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; *as* being delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son; *as* having redemption through Christ's blood, and the forgiveness of sins." In chap. iii. at the beginning, he speaks of them as "risen with Christ; *as* being dead [i. e. *to the law, to sin, and the world;*] *as having* their life hid with Christ in God;" and being such as "when Christ their life should appear, should appear with him in glory." In ver. 7, he speaks of them as "having once walked and lived in lusts, but as having now put off the old man with his deeds, and put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him."

In the first epistle to the members of the church at Thessalonica, in words annexed to his salutation, chap. i. he declares what kind of visibility there was of their *election of God*, in the appearance there had been of true and saving conversion, and their consequent holy life, ver. 3—7. And in the beginning of the second epistle, he speaks of their *faith and love greatly increasing;* and in ver. 7, expresses his *confidence* of meeting them in eternal *rest*, when *the Lord Jesus Christ should be revealed from heaven with his mighty Angels.* And in chap. ii. 13, he *gives thanks to God, that from the beginning he had chosen them to salvation.*

In the epistle to the Christian Hebrews, though the apostle

speaks of some one that once belonged to their churches, but had apostatized and proved themselves hypocrites; yet concerning the rest that remained in good standing, he says, chap. vi. 9, *I am persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation.* Where we may again note, his being thus *persuaded* evidently implies a positive judgment. And in chap. xii. 22, &c. he speaks of them as visibly belonging to the glorious society of *heaven.* And in chap. xiii. 5, 6, he speaks of them as those who may *boldly say, The Lord is my helper.*

The apostle James, writing to the Christians of the *twelve tribes which were scattered abroad*, speaks of them as regenerated persons, meaning, as I observed before, those which were in good standing. Chap. i. 18. "Of his own will begat he us by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures." The apostle Peter, writing to the Jewish Christians scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, (large countries, and therefore they must in the whole be supposed to be a great multitude of people,) to all these, gives the title of *elect*, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. And in the verses next following, speaks of them as regenerated, "or begotten again to a lively hope, to an inheritance incorruptible," &c. And as, "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." And says to them in ver. 8, 9, "Whom (*namely Christ*) having not seen, ye love: in whom though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory; receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls." And in ver. 18, to the end, the apostle speaks of them as "redeemed from their vain conversation, by the precious blood of Christ.—And as having purified their souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit.—Being born again of incorruptible seed," &c. And in the former part of the chap. ii. he speaks of them as "living stones, coming to Christ, and on him built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.—*And as* those that believe, to whom Christ is precious.—*As* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, called out of darkness into marvellous light." The church of Babylon, occasionally mentioned in chap. v. 13, is said to be *elected together with them.* And in his second epistle (which appears by chap. iii. 1, to be written to the same persons) the inscription is, *To them which have obtained like precious faith with us*, i. e. with the apostles and servants of Christ. And in the third chapter, he tells them, both his epistles were designed to *stir up their* PURE *minds.*

In the first epistle of John, written (for ought appears)

to professing Christians in general, chap. ii. 12, &c. the apostle tells them "He writes to them because their sins were forgiven, because they had known him that was from the beginning.—Because they had overcome the wicked one," &c. In ver. 20, 21, he tells them, they have an unction from the Holy One, and know all things; and that he did not write to them because they had not known the truth, but because they had known it, &c. And in ver. 27, he says, "The anointing which ye have received of him, abideth in you, and ye need not that any man should teach you; but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is true, and is no lie; and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him." And in the beginning of chap. iii. he addresses them as those "who were the sons of God, who when he should appear should be like him, because they should see him as he is." In chap. iv. 4, he says, "Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome," &c.

The apostle Jude, in his general epistle, speaks much of apostates and their wickedness; but to other professing Christians, that had not fallen away, he says, ver. 20, 21, "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life:" Plainly supposing, that they had professed faith with love to God our Saviour, and were by the apostles considered as his friends and lovers.—Many other passages to the like purpose might be observed in the epistles, but these may suffice.

Now how unaccountable would these things be, if the members of the primitive Christian churches were not admitted into them under any such notion as their being really godly persons and heirs of eternal life, nor with any respect to such a character appearing on them; and that they themselves joined to these churches without any such pretence, as having no such opinion of themselves!

But it is particularly evident that they had such an opinion of themselves, as well as the apostles of them, by many things the apostles say in their epistles. Thus, in Rom. viii. 15, 16, the apostle speaks of them as "having received the Spirit of adoption, the Spirit of God bearing witness with their spirits, that they were the children of God." And chap. v. 2, of "their rejoicing in hope of the glory of God."—In 1 Cor. i. 7, he speaks of them as "waiting for the coming of the Lord Jesus." In chap. xv. 17, the apostle says to the members of the church at Corinth, "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins:" Plainly supposing, that they hoped their sins were forgiven.—In Philip. i. 25, 26, the apostle speaks of his coming to Philippi, to "increase their joy of faith, and that their rejoicing in Christ might be more abundant:" Implying (as was

observed before,) that they had received comfort already in some degree, as supposing themselves to have a saving interest in Christ.—In 1 Thess. i. 10, he speaks of the members of the church at Thessalonica as "waiting for Christ from heaven, *as one* who had delivered them from the wrath to come."—In Heb. vi. 9, 10, he speaks of the Christian Hebrews as having that "hope which was an anchor of their souls."—The apostle Peter, 1 Epist. i. 3—9, speaks of the visible Christians he wrote to, as being "begotten to a lively hope, of an inheritance incorruptible, &c.—Wherein they greatly rejoiced," &c.—And even the members of the church of Laodicea, the very worst of all the seven churches of Asia, yet looked upon themselves as truly gracious persons, and made that profession; they "said, *they* were rich, and increased in goods, and knew not that they were wretched and miserable," &c. Rev. iii. 17.

It is also evident, that the members of these primitive churches had this judgment one of another, and of the members of the visible church of Christ in general. In 1 Thess. iv. 13, &c. the apostle exhorts the Christian Thessalonians, in mourning for their deceased friends who were visible Christians, *not to sorrow* as the hopeless Heathen were wont to do for their departed friends; upon this consideration, that they had reason to expect to meet them again in *glorious* circumstances at the day of judgment, never to part more. The ground of *comfort* concerning their dead friends, is evidently something *more* than such a *hope* as we ought to have of all that profess Christian *doctrines*, and are not *scandalous* in life, whom we must forbear to censure, because we do not know but they are true saints.—The members of the church of Sardis, next to Laodicea, the worst of the seven churches of Asia, yet *had a name that they lived;* though Christ, who speaks to these seven churches from heaven, in the character of the Searcher of Hearts, (see Rev. ii. 23,) explicitly tells them, that *they were dead;* perhaps all in a dead frame, and the most in a dead state.

These things evidently shew, how all the Christian churches through the world were *constituted* in those days; and what sort of *holiness* or *saintship* it was, that all visible Christians in good standing had a *visibility* and *profession* of, in that apostolic age; and also what sort of visibility of this they had, viz. not only that which gave them right to a kind of *negative charity*, or freedom from censure, but that which might justly induce a *positive* judgment in their favour. The churches to whom these epistles were written, were all the principal churches in the world; some of them very large, as the churches at Corinth and Ephesus. Some of the epistles were directed to all the churches through large countries where the gospel had great success, as the epistle to the Galatians. The epistle to the Hebrews was written to

all the Jewish Christians in the land of Canaan, in distinction from the Jews that lived in other countries, who were called Hellenists or Grecians, because they generally spake the Greek tongue. The epistles of Peter were written to all the Christian Jews through many countries, Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia; containing great numbers of Jews, beyond any other Gentile countries. The epistle of James was directed to all Christian Jews, scattered abroad through the whole world. The epistles of John and Jude, for ought appears in those epistles, were directed to all visible Christians through the whole world. And the apostle Paul directs the first epistle to the Corinthians, not only to the members of that church, but to all professing Christians on the face of the earth: 1 Cor. i. 2, and chap. xiv. 33, calling them *all churches of the saints.* And by what Christ says to the churches of Sardis and Laodicea in the Apocalypse, of whom more evil is said than of any Christian churches spoken of in the New Testament, it appears that even the members of those churches looked on themselves as in a state of salvation, and had such a name with others.

Here possibly some may object, and say, It will not follow from the apostles' speaking to and of the members of the primitive church after the manner which has been observed, as though they supposed them to be *gracious* persons, that therefore a *profession* and *appearance* of this was looked upon in those days as a requisite *qualification* for admission into the visible church; because another reason may be given for it, viz. Such was the *extraordinary* state of things at that day, that the *greater part* of those converted from Heathenism and Judaism to Christianity, were *hopefully gracious persons*, by reason of its being a day of such large communications of divine grace, and such great and unavoidable sufferings of professors, &c.—And the apostles knowing those facts, might properly speak to, and of the churches, as if they were societies of truly gracious persons, because there was just ground on such accounts, to *think* the greater part of them to be so; although no profession or visibility of this was requisite in their members by the *constitution* of those churches, and the door of admission was as open for *others* as for such.

But this cannot be a satisfactory nor a true account of the matter, if we consider the following things.

(1.) The apostles in the very *superscription* or direction of their letters to these churches, and in their *salutation* at the beginning of their epistles, speak of them as gracious persons. For instance, the apostle Peter, in the direction of his first letter to all professing Jewish Christians through many countries, says thus, "To the strangers scattered through Pontus, &c. elect, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through

sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." And in directing his second epistle to the same persons, he says, "Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us," &c. And the apostle Paul directs his epistle to the Romans thus, "To them that be at Rome, beloved of God." So he directs his first epistle to the Corinthians thus, "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus." In what sense he means *sanctified*, his following words shew, ver. 4—9. The same was before observed of words *annexed* to the apostles' salutations, in the beginning of several of the epistles. This shews, that the apostles extend this *character* as far as they do the *epistles* themselves. Which surely would be very improper, and not agreeable to truth, if the apostles at the same time knew very well that such a character did not belong to members of churches, as such, and that they were not received into those churches with any regard to such a character, or upon the account of any right they had to be esteemed such persons. In the superscription of letters to societies of men, we are wont to give them that *title* or *denomination* which properly belongs to them as members of such a body. Thus, if one should write to the Royal Society in London, or the Royal Academy of Sciences at Paris, it would be proper and natural to give them the title of learned; for whether every one of the members truly deserve the epithet, or not, yet the title is agreeable to their *profession*, and what is known to be aimed at, and is professedly insisted on, in the admission of members. But if one should write to the House of Commons, or to the East India Company, and in his superscription give them the title of learned, this would be very improper and ill-judged; because that character does not belong to their profession as members of that body, and *learning* is not a qualification insisted on in their admission of members. Nor would it excuse the impropriety, though the writer might, from his special acquaintance, know it to be fact, that the greater part of them were men of learning. To inscribe a letter to them, would be something strange; but more strange, if it should appear, by various instances, to be a custom so to direct letters to such societies; as it seems to be the manner of the apostles, in their epistles to Christian churches, to address them under titles which imply a profession and visibility of *true holiness*.

(2.) The apostle John, in his general epistle, very plainly manifests, that all to whom he wrote were *supposed* to have true grace, in as much as he declares this to be the qualification he respects in writing to them; and lets them know, he writes to them for that reason, because they are supposed to be persons of the character of such as *have known God, overcome the*

wicked one, and *have had their sins forgiven them.* 1 John ii. 12, 13, 14, 21.

(3.) The apostles when speaking of visible Christians, as a *society*, and what belongs to such a kind of society, speak of it as visibly (*i. e.* in profession and reputation) a *society* of gracious persons. So the apostle Peter speaks of them as a spiritual house, an holy and royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, a chosen or elect generation, called out of darkness into marvellous light, 1 Pet. ii.——The apostle Paul also speaks of them as the family of God, Eph. ii. 19. And in the next chapter he explains himself to mean that family, a part of which is in *heaven;* i. e. they were by profession a part of that divine family.

(4.) The apostle Paul speaks often and expressly of the members of the churches to whom he wrote, as all of them in esteem and visibility truly gracious persons. Philip. i. 6. "Being confident of this very thing, that he which has begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of the Lord Jesus Christ: even as it is meet for me to think this of YOU ALL," (that is, all singly taken, not collectively, according to the distinction before observed.) So Gal. iv. 26. "Jerusalem which is above, which is the mother of us ALL." Rom. vi. "As many of us as have been baptized into Christ, have been baptized into his death." Here he speaks of all that have been baptized; and in the continuation of the discourse, explaining what is here said, he speaks of their being dead to sin, no longer under the law, but under grace: having obeyed the form of doctrine from the heart, being made free from sin, and become the servants of righteousness, &c. Rom. xiv. 7, 8. "None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself," (taken together with the context;) 2 Cor. iii. 18, "We ALL with open face, beholding as in a glass," &c.; and Gal. iii. 26. "Ye are ALL the children of God by faith."

(5.) It is evident, that even in those churches where the greater part of the members were not true saints, as in those degenerate churches of Sardis and Laodicea, which we may suppose were become very lax in their admissions and discipline; yet they looked upon themselves as truly gracious persons, and had with others the reputation of such.

(6.) If we should suppose, that, by reason of the extraordinary state of things in that day, the apostles had reason to think the greater part of the members of churches to be true Christians; yet unless profession and appearance of true Christianity was their proper qualification and the ground of their admission—and unless it was supposed that all of them esteemed themselves true Christians—it is altogether unaccountable that the apostles in their epistles to them, never make any express

particular distinction between those different sorts of members. If the churches were made up of persons who looked on themselves in so different a state—some the children of God, and others the children of the devil, some the high favourites of heaven and heirs of eternal glory, others the children of wrath, being under condemnation to eternal death, and every moment in danger of dropping into hell—why do the apostles make no *distinction* in their manner of addressing them, and in the counsels, reproofs, and warnings they gave them? Why do they never direct their speech to the *unconverted* members of churches, in particular, in a manner tending to awaken them, and make them sensible of the miserable condition they were in, and press them to seek the converting grace of God? It is to be considered, that the apostle Paul was very particularly acquainted with the circumstances of most of those churches to whom he wrote; for he had been among them, was their spiritual father, had been the instrument of gathering and founding those churches, and they had received all their instructions and directions relating to Christianity and their soul-concerns from him; nor can it be questioned but that many of them had opened the case of their souls to him. And if he was sensible, that there was a number among them who made no pretensions to a regenerate state, and that none had reason to judge them to be in such a state, he knew that the sin of such—who lived in the rejection of a Saviour, even in the very house of God, in the midst of gospel-light, and in violation of the most sacrad vows —was peculiarly aggravated, and their guilt and state peculiarly dreadful. Why should he therefore never particularly and distinctly point his addresses to such, applying himself to them in much compassion to their souls, and putting them in mind of their awful circumstances? But instead of this, we observe him continually lumping all together, and indifferently addressing the whole body, as if they were all in happy circumstances, expressing his charity for them all, and congratulating them all in their glorious and eternal privilege. Instead of speaking to them in such a manner as should have a tendency to alarm them with a sense of danger, we see him, on the contrary, calling on all without distinction to rejoice. Philip. iii. 1. "Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord." So 2 Cor. xiii. 11. "Finally, brethren, be of good comfort." Philip. iv. 4. "Rejoice in the Lord alway, and again I say, Rejoice." The matter is insisted upon, as though rejoicing were a duty especially proper for them, and what they had the highest reason for. The apostle not only did not preach terror to those to whom he wrote, but is careful to guard them against fears of God's wrath. In 1 Thess. v. at the beginning, the apostle observes, how that Christ will come on ungodly men "as a thief in the night; and when

they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction shall come upon them, as travail on a woman with child, and they shall not escape :" then immediately he uses caution, that the members of the church at Thessalonica should not take this to themselves, and be terrified, as though they were in danger: and says, in the next words, " But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief; ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day." Ver. 9—11. " For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ; who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him. Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another; even as also ye do." And ver. 16, " Rejoice evermore." How diverse is this way of treating churches, from the method in which faithful ministers are wont to deal with their congregations, wherein are many that make no pretence to true piety, and from the way in which Mr. Stoddard was wont to deal with his congregation. And how would he have undoubtedly judged such a way of treating them the most direct course in the world eternally to undo them? And shall we determine that the apostle Paul was one of those prophets, who *daubed with untempered mortar, and sewed pillows under all arm-holes, and healed the hurt* of immortal souls *slightly, crying, Peace, peace, when there was no peace.*—These things make it most evident, that the primitive churches were constituted as those modern churches, where persons knowing and owning themselves *unregenerate*, are admitted, on principle.

If it be here objected, that the apostle sometimes exhorts those to whom he writes, to *put off the old man*, and *put on the new man*, and to *be renewed in the spirit of their minds*, &c. as exhorting them to seek conversion: I answer, that the meaning is manifestly this, that they should mortify the *remains* of corruption, or the old man, and turn more and more from sin to God. Thus he exhorts the Ephesians to be *renewed*, &c. Eph. iv. 22, 23; whom yet he had before in the same epistle abundantly represented as savingly renewed already; as has been before observed. And the like might be shewn of other instances.

(7.) It is clear, not only that the greater part of the members of the primitive churches were to appearance true Christians; but that they were taken in *under that notion*, and because there appeared in them grounds of such an *estimation* of them. When any happened to be admitted that were otherwise, it was *beside their aim;* in as much as when others were admitted, they are represented as *brought* or *crept in unawares.* Thus the matter is represented by the apostles. Jude, ver. 4.

"There are certain men crept in unawares—ungodly men, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness." Gal. ii. 4. "False brethren, unawares brought in." If it be said, these here spoken of were openly scandalous persons and heretics: I answer, they were not openly scandalous when they were brought in; nor is there any reason to think they were heretics when admitted, though afterwards they turned apostates. Mr. Stoddard says, It does not follow that *all* hypocrites crept in unawares because some did. (*Appeal*, p. 17.) To which I would humbly say, It must be certainly true with respect to all hypocrites who were admitted, either that the church which admitted them was *aware* they were such, or else was not. If there were some of whom the church was *aware* that they were hypocrites, at the time when they were taken in, then the church, in admitting them, did not follow the *rule* that Mr. Stoddard often declares himself to suppose ought to be followed in admitting members, viz. to admit none but what *in a judgment of rational charity are true Christians*. (*Appeal*, p. 2, 3, 10, 28, 33, 67, 73, 93, 94.) But that not only heretics and designing dissemblers *crept in unawares*, but that all *false brethren*, all church-members not truly gracious, did so, appears by such being represented as *bastards* in a family, who are false children and false heirs, brought into it *unawares*, and imposed upon the disposers of those privileges *by stealth*.—Heb. xii. 8. "If ye are without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye *bastards*, and not sons."

Thus it is abundantly manifest, from the apostolical writings, how the visible church of Christ, through the whole world, was at first constituted, under the direction of the apostles themselves, who regulated it according to the infallible guidance of the Spirit of their great Lord and master.—And doubtless, as the Christian church was constituted *then*, so it ought to be constituted *now*. What better rule have we for our ecclesiastical regulations in other respects, than what was done in the *primitive* churches, under the *apostles'* own direction: as particularly the standing officers of the church, presbyters and deacons, the method of introducing ministers in their ordination, &c.? In this matter that I have insisted on, I think the Scripture is abundantly more full, than in those other things.

SECT. VIII.

The scripture represents the visible Church of Christ, as a society having its several members united by the bond of Christian brotherly love.

Besides that general benevolence or charity which the saints have to mankind, and which they exercise towards both the evil and the good in common, there is a *peculiar* and very *distinguishing* kind of affection, that every true Christian *experiences* towards those whom he looks upon as truly *gracious* persons. The soul, at least at times, is very sensibly and sweetly knit to such persons, and there is an ineffable *oneness of heart* with them; whereby, to use the scripture phrase (Acts iv. 32,) "They are of one heart and one soul:" which holy affection is exercised towards others on account of the spiritual image of God in them, their supposed relation to God as his children, and to Christ as his members, and to them as their spiritual brethren in Christ. This sacred affection is a very good and distinguishing note of true grace, much spoken of as such in scripture, under the name of φιλαδελφια, *the love of the brethren*, or *brotherly love;* and is called by Christ, *the receiving a righteous man in the name of a righteous man; and receiving one of Christ's little ones in the name of a disciple*, or *because he belongs to Christ*, (Matt. x. 41, 42, Mark ix. 41;) and a *loving one another as Christ has loved them*, (John xiii. 34, and xv. 13—15;) having a peculiar image of that *oneness* which is between Christ himself and his saints. Compare John xvii. 20, to the end.

This *love* the apostles are often directing Christians to exercise towards fellow-members of the visible church; as in Rom. xii. 10. "Be ye kindly affectionate one to another with *brotherly* love." The words are much more emphatical in the original, and represent in a more lively manner, that peculiar *endearment* there is between *gracious* persons, or those that look on one another as such; τη φιλαδελφια εις αλληλους φιλοστοργοι. The expressions properly signify, *cleaving one to another with brotherly, natural, strong endearment.* With the like emphasis and energy does the apostle Peter express himself, 1 Epistle i. 22. "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit, unto unfeigned love of the brethren, (εις φιλαδελφιαν ανυποκριτον,) see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently." Again, chap. iii. 8. "Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of

another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous." The words in the Greek are much more significant, elegant, and forcible; παντες ομοφρονες, συμπαθεις, φιλαδελφοι, ευσπλαγχνοι, φιλοφρονες. The same peculiar endearment the apostle has doubtless respect to in chap. iv. "Above all things have fervent charity among yourselves." And from time to time he considers it as a note of their piety. Col. i. 4. "We heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all saints." 1 Thess. iv. 9. "As touching *brotherly love*, ye need not that I write unto you; for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another." So Philem. 5. "Hearing of thy love and faith, which thou hast towards the Lord Jesus Christ, and towards all saints." And this is what he exhorts to, Heb. xiii. 1. "Let *brotherly love* continue." 1 Thess. v. 26. "Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss." Compare 1 Cor. xvi. 20; 2 Cor. xiii. 12, and 1 Pet. v. 14.

This φιλαδελφια, or *love to the brethren*, is that virtue which the apostle John so much insists on in his first epistle, as one of the most distinguishing *characteristics* of true grace, and a peculiar evidence that *God dwelleth in us*, and *we in God*. By which must needs be understood a love to saints *as* saints, or on account of the spiritual image of God supposed to be in them, and their spiritual relation to God; according as it has always been understood by orthodox divines. No reasonable doubt can be made, but that the apostle John, in this epistle, has respect to the same sort of *love*, which Christ prescribed to his disciples, in that which he called by way of eminency HIS COMMANDMENT, and HIS NEW COMMANDMENT, which he gave as a great *mark* of their being truly his *disciples*, as this same apostle gives an account in his gospel; and to which he plainly refers, when speaking of *the love of the brethren* in his epistle, chap. ii. 7, 8, and iii. 23. But that *love*, which Christ speaks of in his *new commandment*, is spoken of as between those that *Christ loves* or is supposed *to love;* and which has *his love* to them for its ground and pattern. And if this φιλαδελφια, this *love of the brethren*, so much spoken of by Christ, and by the apostles Paul and John, be not that *peculiar* affection which gracious persons or true saints have one to another, which is so great a part, and so remarkable an exercise of true grace, *where* is it spoken of, at all, in the New Testament?

We see how often the apostles exhort visible Christians to exercise this affection to all other members of the visible church of Christ, and how often they speak of the members of the visible church as actually thus *united*, in places already mentioned. In 2 Cor. ix. 14, the apostle speaks of the members of *other* churches *loving* the members of the church of Corinth, with this peculiar endearment and oneness of heart,

for *the grace of God* in them; "And by their prayer for you, which long after you, for the exceeding grace of God in you." The word translated *long after*, is επιποθουντων; which properly signifies to love with an *exceeding* and *dear* love. And this is represented as the *bond* that unites all the members of the visible church: Acts iv. 32. "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and one soul." This is the same thing which elsewhere is called being of *one mind:* 1 Pet. iii. 8. "Finally, be ye all of one mind." And being of *the same mind:* 1 Cor. i. 10. "That ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind." And Philip. iv. 2. "I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be *of the same mind* in the Lord." And being *like-minded* (the word is the same in the Greek,) Rom. xv. 5, 6. "Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be *like-minded* one towards another; that ye may with *one mind*, and one mouth, glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." There is reason to think, that it is this *oneness of mind*, or being *of one heart and soul*, is meant by that *charity* which the apostle calls the *bond of perfectness*, Col. iii. 14; and represents as the bond of union between all the *members* of the *body*, in Eph. iv. 15, 16. "But speaking the truth in *love*, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ; from whom the whole body *fitly joined together*, *and compacted* by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body, unto the edifying itself in *love*."

Herein seems much to consist the nature of *scandal* in the members of a church, viz. such an offence as is a wound and interruption to this kind of *affection*, being a stumbling-block to Christian judgment, in regard of its esteem of the offender as a *real Christian*, and what much lessens the visibility of his Christian character. And therefore when scandal is removed by visible *repentance*, the church is directed to *confirm their love* to the offender, 2 Cor. ii. 8.

Now this intimate affection towards others as *brethren in Christ* and *fellow-members* of him, must have some apprehension of the understanding, some judgment of the mind, for its foundation. To say, that we must thus *love* others as visible members of Christ, if any thing *else* be meant, than that we must love them *because* they are visibly, or *as* they appear to our judgment, real members of Christ, is in effect to say, that we must thus love them without any foundation at all. In order to a real and fervent affection to another, on account of some amiableness of qualification or relation, the mind must first judge there is that amiableness in the object. The affections of the mind are not so at command that we can make

them strongly to go forth to an object *as* having such loveliness, when at the same time we do not positively *judge* any such thing concerning them, but only *hope* it may be so, because we see no sufficient reason to determine the contrary. There must be a *positive* dictate of the understanding, and some degree of satisfaction of the judgment, to be a ground of that *oneness of heart and soul*, which is agreeable to scripture representations of φιλαδελφια, or *brotherly love;* and a supposition only of that *moral sincerity and virtue*, or *common grace*, which some insist upon, though it may be a sufficient ground of this intimate affection to them as *brethren* in the family of a heavenly Father,—this fervent love to them *in the bowels of Jesus Christ.* For *gospel-sinners* and domestic *enemies* in the house of God, Christians know, are of all others the most hateful enemies to Christ.

It well agrees with the wisdom of Christ, with that peculiar favour he has manifested to his saints, and with his dealings towards them in many other respects, to suppose, he has made provision in his institutions, that they might have the comfort of uniting with such as their hearts are united with, in some special religious exercises and duties of worship, and visible intercourse with their Redeemer; that they should join with those concerning whom they can have some satisfaction of mind, that they are cordially united with them in adoring and expressing their *love* to their common Lord and Saviour, that they may *with one mind*, *with one heart*, *and one soul*, as well as *with one mouth*, *glorify him;* as in the forementioned. (Rom. xv. 5, 6, compared with Acts iv. 32.) This seems to be what this heavenly affection naturally inclines to. And how eminently fit and proper for this purpose is the sacrament of the *Lord's supper*, the Christian church's great feast of *love;* wherein Christ's people sit together as *brethren* in the family of God, at their Father's table, to feast on the love of their Redeemer, commemorating his sufferings for them, and his dying love to them, and sealing their love to him and one another!—It is hardly credible, that Christ has so ordered things as that there are no instituted social acts of worship, wherein *his saints* are to manifest their respect to him, but such as wherein they ordinarily are obliged (*if the rule for admissions be carefully attended*) to join with a society of fellow-worshippers, concerning whom they have no reason to think but that the *greater part* of them are *unconverted*, (and are more provoking enemies to that Lord they love and adore, than most of the very Heathen,) which Mr. Stoddard supposes to be the case with the members of the visible church. *Appeal*, p. 16.

SECT. IX.

It is necessary, that those who partake of the Lord's supper, should judge themselves truly and cordially to accept of CHRIST, *as their only Saviour and chief good; for of this the actions which communicants perform at the Lord's table, are a solemn profession.*

THERE is in the Lord's supper a mutual solemn *profession* of the two parties transacting the covenant of grace, and visibly united in that covenant; the Lord Christ by his minister, on the one hand, and the communicants (who are professing believers) on the other. The administrator of the ordinance acts in the quality of Christ's minister, acts in his name, as representing him; and stands in the place where Christ himself stood at the first administration of this sacrament, and in the original institution of the ordinance. Christ, by the speeches and actions of the minister, makes a solemn profession of his part in the covenant of grace: He exhibits the sacrifice of his body broken and his blood shed; and in the minister's offering the sacramental bread and wine to the communicants, Christ presents himself to the believing communicants, as their propitiation and bread of life; and by these outward signs confirms and seals his sincere engagements to be their Saviour and food, and to impart to them all the benefits of his propitiation and salvation. And they, in receiving what is offered, and eating and drinking the symbols of Christ's body and blood, also profess their part in the covenant of grace: They profess to embrace the promises and lay hold of the hope set before them, to receive the atonement, to receive Christ as their spiritual food, and to feed upon him in their hearts by faith. Indeed what is professed on both sides is the *heart:* For Christ, in offering himself, professes the willingness of *his heart* to be theirs who truly receive him; and the communicants, on their part, profess the willingness of *their hearts* to receive him, which they declare by significant actions. They profess to take Christ as their spiritual food, and bread of life. To accept of Christ as our *bread of life*, is to accept of him *as our Saviour and portion;* as food is both the means of preserving life, and is also the refreshment and comfort of life. The signification of the word *manna*, that great type of this bread of life, is a *portion*. That which God offers to us as our food, he offers as our portion; and that which we accept as our food, we accept as our portion. Thus the Lord's supper is plainly a *mutual* renovation, confirmation, and seal of the covenant of grace:

Both the covenanting parties *profess* their consent to their respective parts in the covenant, and each affixes his *seal* to his profession. And there is in this ordinance the very same thing acted over in profession and sensible signs, which is spiritually transacted between Christ and his spouse in the covenant that unites them. Here we have from time to time the glorious *bridegroom* exhibiting himself with his great love that is stronger than death, appearing clothed in robes of grace, and engaging himself, with all his glory and love, and its infinite benefits, to be theirs, who receive him: And here we have his *spouse* accepting this bridegroom, choosing him for her friend, her only Saviour and portion, and relying on him for all his benefits. And thus the covenant-transaction of this spiritual marriage is confirmed and sealed, from time to time. The *actions* of the communicants at the Lord's table have as expressive and significant a language, as the most solemn words. When a person in this ordinance *takes* and *eats* and *drinks* those things which represent Christ, the plain meaning and implicit profession of these his actions, is this: "I take this crucified Jesus as my Saviour, my sweetest food, my chief portion, and the life of my soul, consenting to acquiesce in him as such, and to hunger and thirst after him only, renouncing all other saviours, and all other portions, for his sake." The actions, *thus interpreted*, are a proper renovation and ratification of the covenant of grace: and no otherwise. And those that take, and eat and drink the sacramental elements at the Lord's table with any *other* meaning, I fear, *know not what they do.*

The *actions* at the Lord's supper thus implying in their nature and signification, a renewing and confirming of the covenant, there is a declarative explicit covenanting supposed to *precede* it; which is the *profession* of religion, before spoken of, that qualifies a person for admission to the Lord's supper. And doubtless there is, or ought to be, as much explicitly professed in *words*, as is implicitly professed in these *actions;* for by these significant actions, the communicant sets his seal but to his *profession.* The established signs in the Lord's supper are fully equivalent to words; they are a renewing and reiterating the same thing which was done *before;* only with this difference, that now it is done by *speaking signs*, whereas before it was by *speaking sounds.* Our taking the bread and wine is as much a *professing* to accept of Christ, at least as a woman's taking a *ring* of the bridegroom in her marriage is a profession and seal of her taking him for her husband. The sacramental elements in the Lord's supper represent Christ as a party in covenant, as truly as a *proxy* represents a prince to a foreign lady in her marriage; and our taking those elements is as truly a professing to accept of Christ, as in the other case the lady's taking the proxy

in her professing to accept the prince as her husband. Or the matter may more fitly be represented by this similitude: It is as if a prince should send an ambassador to a woman in a foreign land, proposing marriage, and by his ambassador should send her his *picture*, and should desire her to manifest her acceptance of his suit, not only by professing her acceptance in words to his ambassador, but in token of her sincerity openly to take or accept that picture, and to seal her profession by thus representing the matter over again by a symbolical action.

To suppose persons ought thus solemnly to *profess* that which at the same time they do not at all imagine they experience in themselves, and do not really pretend to, is a very great absurdity. For a man sacramentally to make *such a profession of religion*, proceeding avowedly on the foot of *such doctrine*, is to profess that which he *does not* profess; his *actions* being no established *signs* of the *thing* supposed to be professed, nor carrying in them the least pretension to it. And therefore doing thus can be no man's duty; unless it be men's duty to make a solemn profession of that which in truth they make *no* profession of. The Lord's supper is most evidently a *professing* ordinance; and the communicant's *profession* must be such as is adjusted to the nature and design of the ordinance; which nothing short of *faith in the blood of Christ* will answer, even *faith unfeigned*, which *worketh by love*. A profession therefore exclusive of this, is essentially defective, and quite unsuitable to the character of a *communicant*.

When the apostle says, 1 Cor. xi. 28, "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat;" it seems most reasonable to understand it of *trying himself* with regard to the *truth* of his *Christianity*, or the reality of his grace; the same as 2 Cor. xiii. 5, where the same word is used in the original. The Greek word (δοκιμαζετω) will not allow of what some have supposed to be the apostle's meaning, *viz.* that a man should consider and inquire into his *circumstances*, and the necessities of his case, that he may know what are the wants for the supply of which he should go to the Lord's table. The word properly signifies *proving* or *trying* a thing with respect to its *quality* and *goodness*, or in order to determine whether it be *true* and *of the right sort*. And so the word is always used in the New Testament; unless that sometimes it is used metonymically, and in such places is variously translated, either *discerning* or *allowing*, *approving*, *liking*, &c.; these being the effects of *trial*. Nor is the word used more frequently in the New Testament for any sort of trial whatever, than for the trial of professors with regard to their *grace or piety*. The word (as Dr. Ames in his Catecheseos Sciagraphia, and Mr. Willard in his Body of Divinity, observe) is borrowed from goldsmiths, properly signifying the *trial* they

make of their silver and gold, whether it be *genuine* or *counterfeit:* and with a manifest allusion to this original application of the word, is often used in the New Testament for *trying* the piety of professors. It is used with this view in all the following texts: 1 Pet. i. 7. "That the *trial* of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be *tried* by fire, might be found unto praise," &c. 1 Cor. iii. 13. "The fire shall *try* every man's work of what sort it is." James i. 3.—"The *trying* of your faith worketh patience." 1 Thess. ii. 4. "God who *trieth* our hearts." The same word is used in 2 Cor. viii. 8. "To *prove* the sincerity of your love." So, Gal. vi. 3, 4. "If any man thinketh himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself: But let every man *prove* his own work." In all these places there is the same word in the Greek with that in the text now under consideration.

When the apostle directs professing Christians to *try themselves*, using this word indefinitely, as properly signifying the examining or proving of a thing whether it be *genuine* or *counterfeit*, the most natural construction of his advice is, that they should *try themselves* with respect to their spiritual state and religious profession, whether they are *disciples indeed*, real and genuine Christians, or whether they are not false and hypocritical professors. As if a man should bring a piece of metal that had the colour of gold, with the impress of the king's coin, to a goldsmith, and desire him to *try* that money, without adding any words to limit his meaning, would not the goldsmith naturally understand, that he was to try whether it was true gold or true money?

But here it is said by some, that the *context* of the passage under debate (1 Cor. xi. 28,) plainly limits the meaning of the word in that place; the apostle there speaking of those things that had appeared among the communicants at Corinth, which were of a *scandalous* nature, so doubtless unfitting them for the Lord's supper; and therefore when the apostle directs them to *examine* or prove themselves, it is but just, to suppose his meaning to be, that they should try whether they be not disqualified by *scandal*.—To this I answer, though the apostle putting the Corinthians upon trying themselves, was on *occasion* of mentioning some scandalous practices found among them, yet this is by no means any argument of its being only his meaning, that they should *try themselves* whether they were *scandalous* persons; and not, that they should try whether they were *genuine Christians*. The very nature of *scandal* (as was observed before) is that which tends to obscure the visibility of the piety of professors, and wound others' charity towards them, by bringing the reality of their grace into doubt; and therefore what could be more natural, than for the apostle, when mentioning such scan-

dals among the Corinthians, to put them upon trying the state of their souls, and proving their sincerity? This is certainly the case in this apostle's directing the same persons to *prove themselves*, 2 Cor. xiii. 5, using the same word there, which he uses here, and giving his direction on the like occasion. For in the second epistle (as well as in the first) his putting them on *examining* and *proving themselves*, was on occasion of his mentioning some *scandals* found among them; as is plain from the foregoing context. And yet there it is expressly said, That the thing concerning which he directs them to *prove* themselves, is, whether they be *in the faith*, and whether *Christ is in them*. Nor is there any thing more in the preceding context of one place, than in that of the other, obliging or leading us to understand the apostle to intend only a trying whether they were *scandalous*, and not whether they were sincere Christians.

And as to the words following in the next verse; "For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body:"—These words by no means make it evident (as some hold) that what the apostle would have them examine themselves about, is, whether they have *doctrinal knowledge*, sufficient to understand, that the bread and wine in the sacrament signify the body and blood of Christ: But on the contrary, to interpret the apostle in this sense only, is unreasonable, upon several accounts. (1.) None can so much as attempt such an *examination*, without *first knowing*, that the Lord's body and blood *is signified* by these elements. For merely a man putting this question to himself, *Do I understand that this bread and this wine signify the body and blood of Christ?* supposes him already to know it from a previous information; and therefore to exhort persons to such an examination would be absurd. And then (2.) it is incredible, that there should be any such *gross ignorance* in a number of the communicants in the Corinthian church, if we consider what the Scripture informs us concerning that church. St. Paul was an able and thorough instructor and spiritual father, who founded that church, brought them out of their Heathenish darkness, and initiated them in the Christian religion. He had instructed them in the nature and ends of gospel-ordinances, and continued at Corinth, constantly labouring in the word and doctrine for a long while, no less than a *year and six months*; and, we may well suppose, administered the Lord's supper among them every Lord's day; for the apostle speaks of it as the manner of that church to communicate at the Lord's table with such frequency, 1 Cor. xvi. 2. And the Corinthian church when the apostle wrote this epistle, was noted for excelling in *doctrinal knowledge*; as is evident by chap. i. 5—7, and several other passages in the epistle. Besides, the communicants were expressly told

at every communion, every week, when the bread and wine were delivered to them in the administration, that the bread signified the body, and that the wine signified the blood of Christ. And 3) the apostle by his argument in chap. x. 16, supposes the Corinthians doctrinally acquainted with the subject already. It therefore appears to me much more reasonable, to apprehend the case to be thus: The offensive behaviour of the communicants at Corinth gave the apostle reason to suspect, that some of them came to the Lord's table without a proper impression and true sense of the great and glorious things there signified; having no habitual hunger or relish for the spiritual food there represented, no inward vital and experimental taste of that *flesh of the Son of man*, which is *meat indeed*. The word translated *discerning*, signifies to *discriminate* or *distinguish*. The *taste* is the proper sense whereby to discern or distinguish food, Job xxxiv. 3. And it is by a spiritual *sense* or *taste* we discern or distinguish spiritual food. Heb. v. 14.—"Those who by reason of use, have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil:" προς διακρισιν, &c. a word of the same root with that rendered *discerning*, in 1 Cor. xi. 29. He that has no habitual relish of that spiritual food, which is represented and offered at the Lord's table; he that has no spiritual taste, wherewith to perceive any thing more at the Lord's supper, than in common food; or that has no higher view, than with a little seeming devotion to eat bread, in the way of an ordinance, but without regarding in his heart the spiritual meaning and end of it, and without being at all suitably affected by the dying love of Christ therein commemorated; such a one may most truly and properly be said *not to discern the Lord's body*.—When therefore the apostle exhorts to *self-examination* as a preparative for the sacramental supper, he may well be understood to put professors upon inquiring whether they have such a principle of *faith*, by means whereof they are habitually in a capacity and disposition of mind to *discern the Lord's body* practically and spiritually (as well as speculatively and notionally) in their communicating at the Lord's table: which is what none can do who have a faith short of that which is justifying and saving. It is only a living faith that capacitates men to *discern the Lord's body* in the sacrament with that spiritual sensation or spiritual gust, which is suitable to the nature and design of the ordinance, and which the apostle seems principally to intend.

PART III.

OBJECTIONS ANSWERED.

OBJECT. I.

THE scripture calls the members of the visible church by the name of *disciples*, *scholars*, or *learners;* and that suggests to us this notion of the visible church, that it is the *school* of Christ, into which persons are admitted in order to their *learning of Christ*, and coming to spiritual attaintments, in the use of the means of teaching, discipline, and training up, established in the school. Now if this be a right notion of the visible church, then reason shews that no other qualifications are necessary in order to being members of this *school*, than such a *faith* and *disposition of mind* as are requisite to persons putting themselves under Christ as their *master* and *teacher*, and subjecting themselves to the *orders* of the school. But a *common faith* and *moral sincerity* are sufficient for this.—Therefore the scripture leads us to suppose the visible church to be *properly constituted* of those who have these qualifications, though they have not *saving faith* and *true picty.*

ANSWER 1.—I own, the scripture calls the members of the visible church by the name of *disciples;* but deny, that it therefore follows that the church of which they are members, is duly and properly constituted of those who have not true piety. Because, if this consequence was good, then it would equally follow, that not only the *visible*, but also the *invisible* or *mystical* church is properly constituted of those who have not unfeigned faith and true piety. For the members of the mystical church, *as such*, and to denote the special character of such, are called *disciples;* Luke xiv. 26, 27, 33, and John viii. 31, and xiii. 35, and xv. 8. This shews, that in the argument I am answering, there is no connexion between the premises and the conclusion. For the force of the objection consists in this, that the members of the visible church are called *disciples* in scripture: This is the sum total of the premises: And if there be any connexion between the premises and the conclusion, it must lie in the truth

of this proposition; *The church whose members are called by the name of* disciples, *as signifying their state and quality as members of that society, that church is properly and fitly constituted, not only of persons truly pious, but of others that have merely a common faith and virtue.* But this proposition, we have seen, is not true; and so there is no connexion between the former and latter part of it, which are the same with the premises and conclusion of this argument.

2. Though I do not deny, that the visible church of Christ may fitly be represented as a school of Christ, where persons are trained up in the use of means, in order to *some* spiritual attainments: Yet it will not hence necessarily follow, that this is in order to *all* good attainments; for it will not follow but that certain good attainments may be *pre-requisite*, in order to a *place* in the school. The church of Christ is a school appointed for the training up of Christ's *little children*, to greater degrees of knowledge, higher privileges, and greater serviceableness in this world, and more meetness for the possession of their eternal inheritance. But there is no necessity of supposing, that it is in order to fit them to become Christ's children, or to be introduced into his family; any more than there is a necessity of supposing, because a prince puts his children under tutors, that therefore it must be in order to their being of the royal family. If it be necessary that there should be a church of Christ appointed as a school of instruction and discipline, to bring persons to *all* good attainments whatsoever, then it will follow, that there must be a visible church constituted of *scandalous* and *profane* persons and *heretics*, and all in common that assume the Christian name, that so means may be used with them in order to bring them to *moral sincerity*, and an acknowledgment of the Christian faith.

2. I grant, that no other qualifications are necessary in order to being members of that school of Christ which is his visible church, than such as are requisite in order to *their subjecting themselves to Christ as their master and teacher*, and *subjecting themselves to the laws and orders of his school:* Nevertheless I deny, that a *common faith* and *moral sincerity* are sufficient for this; because none do truly subject themselves to Christ *as their master*, but such as having their *hearts purified by faith*, are delivered from the reigning power of *sin:* For we cannot subject ourselves to obey *two* contrary *masters* at the same time. None submit to Christ as *their teacher*, but those who truly receive him as their prophet, to teach them by his word and Spirit; giving up themselves to his teachings, *sitting* with *Mary* at *Jesus' feet to hear his word*; and hearkening more to his dictates, than those of their blind and deceitful lusts, and relying on his wisdom more than their own. The scripture knows nothing of

an ecclesiastical school constituted of *enemies of the cross of Christ*, and appointed to bring such to be reconciled to him and submit to him as their Master. Neither have they who are not truly pious persons, any true disposition of heart to submit to the *laws* and *orders* of Christ's school, the rules which his word prescribes to all his scholars; such as, *to love their Master* supremely; *to love one another as brethren;* and *to love their book*, i. e. their Bible, more than vain trifles and amusements, yea, above gold and silver; *to be faithful to the interest of the Master and of the school;* to *depend on his teachings;* to *cry to him for knowledge; above all their gettings, to get understanding*, &c.

4. Whatever ways of constituting the church may to us seem fit, proper, and reasonable, the *question* is, not what constitution of Christ's church seems convenient to *human* wisdom, but what constitution is actually established by Christ's infinite wisdom. Doubtless, if men should set their wits to work, and proceed according to what seems good in their sight, they would greatly alter Christ's constitution of his church, to make it more convenient and beautiful, and would adorn it with a vast variety of ingenious inventions; as the church of Rome has done. The question is, whether this *school* of Christ which they talk of, made up very much of those who pretend to no experiences or attainments but what consist with their being *enemies* of Christ in their hearts, and who in reality love the vilest lust better than him, be that church of Christ which in the New Testament is denominated *his city, his temple, his family, his body, &c.* by which names the visible church of Christ is there frequently called.

I acknowledge, that *means* of Christ's appointment, are to be used with those who are Christ's, and do not profess themselves any other, to change their *hearts*, and bring them to be Christ's *friends and disciples*. Such means are to be used with all sorts of persons, with Jews, Mahometans, Heathens, with nominal Christians that are heretical or vicious, the profane, the intemperate, the unclean, and all other enemies of Christ; and these means to be used constantly, and laboriously. Scandalous persons need to go to *school*, to learn to be Christians, as much as other men. And there are many persons that are not *morally sincere*, who from selfish and sinister views consent ordinarily to go to church, and so be in the way of means. And none ought to forbid them thus going to Christ's *school*, that they may be taught by him, in the ministry of the gospel. But yet it will not follow, that such a *school* is the *church* of *Christ*. Human laws can put persons, even those who are very vicious, into the *school* of Christ, in that sense; they can oblige them constantly to be present at public teaching, and attend on the means of grace

appointed by Christ, and dispensed in his name: But human laws cannot join men to the *church* of Christ, and make them members of his body.

OBJECT. II.

Visible saintship in the scripture-sense cannot be the same with that which has been supposed and insisted on, because Israel of old were called *God's people*, when it is certain the greater part of them were far from having any *such* visible holiness as this. Thus the *ten tribes* were called God's people, Hos. iv. 6; after they had revolted from the true worship of God, and had obstinately continued in their idolatrous worship at Bethel and Dan for about two hundred and fifty years, and were at that time, a little before their captivity especially, in the height of their wickedness. So the Jews are called *God's people*, in Ezek. xxxvi. 20, and other places, at the time of their captivity in Babylon, a time when most of them were abandoned to all kinds of the most horrid and open impieties, as the prophets frequently represent. Now it is certain, that the people at that time were not called *God's people* because of any visibility of true piety to the eye of reason or of a rational charity, because most of them were grossly wicked, and declared their sin as Sodom. And in the same manner wherein the Jews of old were *God's people*, are the members of the visible Christian Gentile church *God's people;* for they are spoken of as *grafted into the same olive tree*, from whence the former were *broken off by unbelief.*

Answer 1. The argument proves too much, and therefore nothing at all. Those whom I oppose in this controversy, will in effect as much oppose themselves in it, as me. The objection if it has any force, equally militates against their and my notion of visible saintship. For those Jews, which it is alleged were called God's people, and yet were so notoriously, openly, and obstinately wicked, had neither any visibility of true piety, nor yet of that *moral sincerity* in the profession and duties of the true religion, which the opponents themselves suppose to be requisite in order to a proper visible holiness, and a due admission to the privileges and ordinances of the church of God. None will pretend, that these obstinate idolaters and impious wretches had those qualifications which are now requisite in order to an admission to the Christian sacraments. And therefore, to what purpose can they bring this objection? which, if it proves any thing, overthrows my scheme and their own both together, and both in an equally effectual manner. And not only so, but will thoroughly destroy the schemes of all *Protestants* through the world, concerning the qualifications of the subjects of Christian ordinances. And therefore the support

of what I have laid down against those whom I oppose in this controversy, requires no further answer to this objection. Nevertheless, for greater satisfaction, I would here observe further:

2. That such appellations as God's *people*, God's *Israel*, and some other like phrases, are used and applied in Scripture with considerable *diversity* of intention. Thus, we have a plain distinction between the *house of Israel*, and the *house of Israel* in Ezek. xx. 38—40. By the house of *Israel* in the 39th verse is meant literally the nation or family of *Israel*. But by the house of *Israel* in the 40th verse seems to be intended the *spiritual house*, the body of God's visible saints, that should attend the ordinances of his public worship in gospel-times. So likewise there is a distinction made between the *house of Israel*, and *God's disciples* who should profess and visibly adhere *to his law and testimony*, in Isaiah viii. 14—17. And though the whole nation of the Jews are often called *God's people* in those degenerate times wherein the prophets were sent to reprove them, yet at the same time they are charged as *falsely calling themselves of the holy city*. Isaiah xlviii. 2. And God often tells them, they are rather to be reckoned among aliens, and as children of the Ethiopians, or posterity of the ancient Canaanites, on account of their grossly wicked and scandalous behaviour. See Amos ix. 7, &c. Ezek. xvi. 2, 3, &c. ver. 45, &c. Isa. i. 10.

It is evident that God sometimes, according to the methods of his marvellous mercy and long-suffering towards mankind, has a merciful respect to a degenerate church, become exceeding corrupt, and constituted of members who have not those qualifications which ought to be insisted on. God continues still to have respect to them so far as not utterly to forsake them, or wholly to deny his confirmation of and blessing on their administrations. And not being utterly renounced of God, their administrations are to be looked upon as in some respect valid, and the society as in some sort a people or church of God. This was the case with the church of Rome, at least till the Reformation and Council of Trent; for till then we must own their baptisms and ordinations to be valid.—The church that the pope sits in, is called, *The temple of God.* 2 Thess. ii. 4.

And with regard to the people of Israel, it is very manifest, that something diverse is oftentimes intended by that nation being *God's people*, from their being visible saints, visibly holy, or having those qualifications which are requisite in order to a due admission to the ecclesiastical privileges of such. That *nation*, that *family of Israel according to the flesh*, and *with regard to that external and carnal qualification*, were in some sense adopted by God to be his *peculiar people*, and his *covenant people.*

That is not only evident by what has been already observed, but also indisputably manifest from Rom. ix. 3, 4, 5. "I have great heaviness and continual sorrow of heart; for I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen ACCORDING TO THE FLESH, who are Israelites, to whom pertaineth the ADOPTION, and the glory, and the COVENANTS, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the PROMISES; whose are the fathers; and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came." It is to be noted, that the privileges here mentioned are spoken of as belonging to the Jews, not now as visible saints, not as professors of the true religion, not as members of the visible church of Christ; but only as people of *such a nation*, such a blood, such an external and carnal relation to the patriarchs their ancestors, *Israelites*, ACCORDING TO THE FLESH. For the apostle is speaking here of the *unbelieving Jews*, professed unbelievers, that were out of the Christian church, and open visible enemies to it, and such as had no right to the external privileges of Christ's people. So, in Rom. xi. 28, 29, this apostle speaks of the same *unbelieving Jews*, as in some respect an *elect people*, and interested in the *calling*, *promises*, and *covenants* God formerly gave to their forefathers, and as still *beloved* for their sakes. "As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sake; but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes: for the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." These things are not privileges belonging to the Jews now as a people of the right religion, or in the true church of visible worshippers of God; but as a people of such a pedigree or blood; and that even after the ceasing of the Mosaic administration. But these were privileges more especially belonging to them under the Old Testament: they were a *family* that God had chosen in distinction from all others to shew special favour to, above all other *nations*. It was manifestly agreeable to God's design to constitute things so under the Old Testament, that the means of grace and spiritual privileges and blessings should be—though not wholly, yet in a great measure—confined to a *particular family*, much more than those privileges and blessings are confined to any posterity or blood now under the gospel. God purposely by these favours distinguished *that nation* not only from those who were not professed worshippers of the true God, but also in a great measure *from other nations*, by a constituted wall of separation. This was not merely a wall between professors and non-professors, but between NATION and NATIONS. God, if he pleases, may by his sovereignty annex his blessing, and in some measure fix it, for his own reasons, to a particular blood, as well as to a particular place or spot of ground, to a certain building, to a particular heap of stones, or

altar of brass, to particular garments, and other external things. And it is evident, that he actually did affix his blessing to that particular external family of Jacob, very much as he did to the city Jerusalem, where he chose to place his name, and to Mount Zion, *where he commanded the blessing*. God did not so affix his blessing to Jerusalem or Mount Zion, as to limit himself, either by confining the blessing wholly to that place, never to bestow it elsewhere; nor by obliging himself always to bestow it on those that sought him there; nor yet obliging himself never to withdraw his blessing from thence, by forsaking his dwelling-place there, and leaving it to be a common or profane place. But he was pleased to make it the seat of his blessing in a peculiar manner, in great distinction from other places. In like manner did he fix his blessing to the progeny of Jacob. It was a family which he delighted in, and which he blessed in a peculiar manner, and to which in a great measure he confined the blessing; but not so as to limit himself, or so as to oblige himself to bestow it on all of that blood, or not to bestow it on others that were not of that blood. He affixed his blessing both to the place and nation, by sovereign election, Psal. cxxxii. 13—15. He annexed and fixed his blessing to both by covenant.

To that nation he fixed his blessing by his covenant with the patriarchs. Indeed the main thing, the substance and marrow of that covenant which God made with Abraham and the other patriarchs, was the *covenant of grace*, which is continued in these days of the gospel, and extends to all his spiritual seed, of the Gentiles as well as Jews: But yet that covenant with the patriarchs contained other things that were appendages to that everlasting covenant of grace; promises of lesser matters, subservient to the grand promise of the future seed, and typical of things appertaining to him. Such were those that annexed the blessing to the land of Canaan, and the progeny of Isaac and Jacob. Just so it was also as to the covenant God made with David. 2 Sam. vii. and Psal. cxxxii. If we consider that covenant with regard to its marrow and soul, it was the covenant of grace: But there were other subservient promises which were typical of its benefits; such were promises of blessings to the nation of Israel, of continuing the temporal crown to David's posterity, and of fixing the blessing to Jerusalem or Mount Zion, as the place which he chose to set his name there. And in this sense it was that the *very family* of Jacob were *God's people by covenant*, and his *chosen people;* even when they were no visible saints, when they lived in idolatry, and made no profession of the true religion.

On the whole, it is evident that the *very nation* of Israel,

not as visible saints, but *as the progeny of Jacob according to the flesh*, were in some respect a *chosen people*, a *people of God*, a *covenant people*, an *holy nation*; even as Jerusalem was a *chosen city*, the *city of God*, a *holy city*, and a city that God had engaged *by covenant* to dwell in.

Thus a sovereign and all-wise God was pleased to ordain things with respect to *the nation* of Israel. Perhaps we may not be able to give all the reasons of such a constitution; but some of them seem to be pretty manifest; as,

1. The great and main end of separating one particular nation from all others, as God did *the nation* of Israel, was to prepare the way for the coming of the *Messiah*. God's covenant with Abraham and the other patriarchs implied that the Messiah should be *of their blood*, or their seed *according to the flesh*. And therefore it was requisite that *their progeny according to the flesh* should be fenced in by a wall of separation, and made *God's people*. If the Messiah had been born of some of the *professors* of *Abraham's religion*, but of some other nation, that religion being propagated from nation to nation, as it is now under the gospel, it would not have answered the covenant with Abraham, for the Messiah to have been born of Abraham's seed only in this sense. The *Messiah* being by covenant so related to Jacob's *progeny according to the flesh*, God was pleased, agreeable to the nature of such a covenant, to shew great respect to that people on account of that external relation. Therefore the apostle mentions it as one great privilege, that of them *according to the flesh* Christ came, Rom. ix. 5. As the introducing of the *Messiah* and his salvation and kingdom was the special design of all God's dealings and peculiar dispensations towards that people, the natural result of this was, that great account should be made of their being *of that nation*, in God's covenant dealings with them.

2. That nation was a *typical nation*. There was then literally a *land*, which was a type of heaven, the true dwelling-place of God; and an *external city*, which was a type of the spiritual city of God; *an external temple of God*, which was a type of his spiritual temple. So there was an *external people and family of God*, by carnal generation, which was a type of his spiritual progeny. And the covenant by which they were made a people of God, was a type of the covenant of grace; and so is sometimes represented as a marriage-covenant. God, agreeably to the nature of that dispensation, shewed a great regard to external and carnal things in those days, as types of spiritual things. What a great regard God did shew then to external qualifications for privileges and services, appears in this, that there is ten times so much said in the Books of Moses about such qualifications in the institutions

of the passover and tabernacle services, as about any moral qualifications whatsoever. And so much were such typical qualifications insisted on, that even by the law of Moses, the congregation of the Lord, or church of visible worshippers of God, and the number of public professors of the true religion who were visible saints, were not the same. Some were of the latter, that were not of the former: as the eunuchs, who were excluded the congregation, though never so externally religious, yea truly pious; and so also bastards, &c.

3. It was the sovereign pleasure of God to choose the posterity of *Jacob according to the flesh*, to reserve them for special favours to the end of time. And therefore they are still kept a distinct nation, being still reserved for distinguishing mercy in the latter day, when they shall be restored to the church of God. God is pleased in this way to testify his regard to their holy ancestors, and his regard to their external relation to Christ. Therefore the apostle still speaks of them as an *elect nation*, and *beloved for their fathers' sakes*, even after they were broken off from the good olive by unbelief. God's covenant with Abraham is in some sense in force with respect to that people, and reaches them even to this day; and yet surely they are not God's covenant people, in the sense that visible Christians are. See Lev. xxvi. 42.

If it be said, It was often foretold by the prophets, that in gospel days other *nations* should be the people of God, as well as the *nation* of the Jews: And when Christ sent forth his apostles, he bid them go and *disciple all nations:*

I answer; By a common figure of speech the prevailing part of a nation are called *the nation*, and what is done to them is said to be done to the nation, and what is done *by* them is said to be done *by* that nation. And it is to be hoped, that the time is coming when the prevailing part of many nations, yea of every nation under heaven, will be regularly brought into the visible church of Christ. If by *nations*, in these prophecies, we understand any other than the prevailing part, and it be insisted on that we must understand it of all the people belonging to those nations; there never yet has been any nation in this sense regularly brought into the visible church of Christ, even according to the scheme of those whom I oppose. For there never yet has been a whole nation outwardly moral. And besides, what Mr. Blake says in his *Treatise of the Covenant*, page 238, may be applied here, and serve as an answer to this objection: "The prophecies of the Old Testament (says he) of the glory of the New Testament times, are in Old Testament phrases, by way of allusion to the worship of those times, set forth to us." In Rev. xxi. 24, *nations* are spoken of, as having an interest in the *New Jerusalem*, which yet is represented as perfectly pure, with-

out the least degree of pollution and defilement, ver. 27. And as for the command to the apostles, to *disciple all nations*, it was a direction to them as to what they should attempt, not a prediction of what they should bring to pass in their day. For they never brought one-half of any one nation into the visible Christian church, nor any at all in one-half of the nations in the world, it is very probable.

If it should be further objected, that it is an evidence that Gentile Christians are visible saints, according to the New Testament notion of visible saintship, in the very same manner as the whole Jewish nation were till they were broken off by their obstinate rejection of the Messiah; that the Gentile Christians are represented as being *grafted into the same olive*, from whence the Jews were *broken off by unbelief*, Rom. xi. 17, &c.

I would inquire, What any one can intend by this objection? Whether it be this, viz. that we ought to insist on no higher or better qualifications, in admitting persons as members of the Christian church, and to all its privileges, than the whole Jewish nation in Christ's time possessed, till they had obstinately persisted in their rejection of him? If this is *not* intended, the objection is nothing to the purpose: Or, if this *be* intended, neither then is it to the purpose of those with whom I have especially to do in this controversy, who hold *orthodoxy*, *knowledge* of the fundamental doctrines of religion, *moral sincerity*, and a *good conversation*, to be qualifications, which ought to be insisted on, in order to a visible church-state. For a very great part of those Jews were destitute of these qualifications; many of them were Sadducees, who denied a future state; others of them Herodians, who were occasionally conformists with the Romans in their idolatries; the prevailing sect among them were Pharisees, who openly professed the false doctrine of justification by the works of the law and external privileges, that *leaven of the Pharisees*, which Christ warns his disciples to beware of. Many of them were scandalously *ignorant*, for their teachers had taken away the key of knowledge. Multitudes were grossly *vicious*, for it was a generation in which all manner of sin and wickedness prevailed.

I think that text in Rom. xi. can be understood no otherwise, in any consistence with plain fact, than that the Gentile Christians succeeded the Jews, who had been, either in themselves or ancestors, the children of Abraham, with respect to a visible interest in the covenant of grace, until they were broken off from the church, and ceased to be visible saints by their open and obstinate unbelief. Indeed their ancestors had all been thus broken off from the church of visible saints; for every branch or family of the stock of Jacob had been in the church of visible saints, and each branch withered and failed through

unbelief. This was the highest and most important sense, in which any of the Jews were externally the children of Abraham, and implied the greatest privileges. But there was another sense, in which the whole nation, including even those of them who were no visible saints, were his children, which (as has been shewn) implied great privileges, wherein Christian Gentiles do not succeed them, though they have additional ecclesiastical privileges, vastly beyond the Jews.

Whether I have succeeded, in rightly explaining these matters, or no, yet my failing in it is of no great importance with regard to the strength of the objection, that occasioned my attempting it; which was, that scandalously *wicked* men among the Jews are called *God's people*, &c. The objection, as I observed, is as much against the scheme of those whom I oppose, as against my scheme; and therefore it as much concerns *them*, to find out some explanation of the matter, that shall shew something else is intended by it, than their having the qualifications of visible saints, as it does me; and a failing in such an attempt as much affects and hurts their cause, as it does mine.

OBJECT. III.

Those in Israel, who made no profession of piety of heart, did according to divine institution partake of the *passover;* a Jewish *sacrament*, representing the same things, and a seal of the very same covenant of grace with the *Lord's supper;* and particularly, it would be unreasonable to suppose, that all made a profession of godliness whom God commanded to keep that first *passover* in Egypt, which the whole congregation were required to keep, and there is no shadow of any such thing as all first making a solemn public profession of those things wherein true piety consists: And so the people in general partook of the *passover*, from generation to generation; but it would be improbable to suppose, that they all professed a supreme regard to God in their hearts.

Answer 1. The affair of the Israelites' participation of the *passover*, and particularly that first *passover* in Egypt, is attended with altogether as much difficulty in regard to the qualifications which the *objectors* themselves suppose requisite in communicants at the Lord's table, as with regard to those which I insist upon; and if there be any argument in the case, it is fully as strong an argument against *their* scheme, as mine.

One thing they insist upon as a requisite qualification for the Lord's supper, is a public profession of religion as to the

essential *doctrines* of it. But there is no more public profession of this kind, preceding that passover in Egypt, than of a profession of godliness. Here, not to insist on the great doctrines of the *fall of man*, of our *undone state by nature*, of the *Trinity*, of our *dependence on the free grace of God for justification*, &c. let us take only those two doctrines of a *future state of rewards and punishments*, and the doctrine of *the Messiah to come*, that Messiah who was represented in the *passover*. Is there any more appearance, in sacred story, of the people making a public profession in Egypt of these doctrines, before they partook of the passover, than of their making profession of the love of God? And is there any more probability of the former, than of the latter? *Another* thing which they on the other side suppose necessary to a due attendance on the Lord's supper, is, that when any have openly been guilty of gross sins, they should before they come to this sacrament, openly *confess* and *humble* themselves for their faults. Now it is evident by many scriptures, that a great part of the children of Israel in Egypt had been guilty of joining with the Egyptians in worshipping their false gods, and had lived in *idolatry*. But the history in Exodus gives us no account of any public solemn confession of, or humiliation for this great sin, before they came to the passover. Mr. Stoddard observes, (*Appeal*, p. 58, 59.) that there was in the church of Israel a way appointed by God for the removal of scandals; men being required in that case to offer up their *sacrifices*, attended with *confession* and visible signs of *repentance*. But where do we read of the people offering up sacrifices in Egypt, attended with confession, for removing the scandal of that most heinous sin of *idolatry* they had lived in? Or is there any more probability of their publicly professing their repentance and humiliation for their sin, before their celebrating the passover, than of their publicly professing to love God above all? *Another* thing which they suppose to be requisite in order to admission to the Lord's table, and about which they would have a particular care be taken, is, that every person admitted give evidence of a competent *knowledge* in the doctrines of religion, and none be allowed to partake who are grossly ignorant. Now there is no more appearance of this with regard to the congregation in Egypt, than of a *profession of godliness;* and it is as difficult to suppose it. There is abundant reason to suppose, that vast numbers in that nation, consisting of more than a million of adult persons, had been brought up in a great degree of ignorance, amidst their slavery in Egypt, where the people seem to have almost forgotten the true God and the true religion. And though pains had been taken by Moses, now for a short season, to instruct the people better; yet it must be considered, it is a very great work, to take a whole nation under such degrees of

ignorance and prejudice, and bring every one of them to a competent degree of knowledge in religion; and a greater work still for Moses both thus to instruct them, and also by examination or otherwise, to come to a just satisfaction, that all had indeed attained to such knowledge.

Mr. Stoddard insists, that if grace be requisite in the Lord's supper, it would have been as much so in the *passover*, in as much as the chief thing which the *passover* (as well as the Lord's supper) represents, is Christ's sufferings. But if on this account the same qualifications are requisite in both ordinances, then it would be as requisite that the partakers should have knowledge to *discern the Lord's body* (in Mr. Stoddard's sense of 1. Cor. xi. 29,) in the *passover*, as in the Lord's supper. But this certainly is as difficult to suppose, as that they professed godliness. For how does it appear, that the people in general who partook of the *passover*—knew that it signified the death of the *Messiah*, and the way in which he should make atonement for sin by his blood? Does it look very likely that they should know this, when Christ's own disciples had not knowledge thus to *discern the Lord's body* in the *passover*, of which they partook from year to year with their Master? Can it be supposed, they actually knew Christ's death and the design of it to be thereby signified, when they did not so much as realize the fact itself, that Christ was to die, at least not till the year before the last passover? Besides, how unreasonable would it be, to suppose, that the Jews understood what was signified, pertaining to Christ and salvation by him, in all those many kinds of sacrifices, which they attended and partook of, and all the vast variety of ceremonies belonging to them; all which sacrifices were sacramental representations of Christ's death, as well as the sacrifice of the passover? The apostle tells us, that all these things had *a shadow of good things to come*, the things concerning *Christ;* and yet there are many of them, which the church of Christ to this day does not understand; though we are under a thousand times greater advantage to understand them, than they were. For we have the *New Testament*, wherein God uses *great plainness of speech*, to guide us, and live in days wherein the *vail* which Moses put over his face is taken away in Christ, and the vail of the temple rent, and have the substance and the antetype plainly exhibited, and so have opportunity to compare these with those shadows.

If it be objected, as a difficulty that lies against our supposing a profession of godliness requisite to a participation of the *passover*, that they who were *uncircumcised*, were expressly forbidden to partake; and if conversion was as important and a more important qualification than circumcision, why were not the *unregenerate* as expressly forbidden? I answer; Why were

not *scandalous* sinners as expressly forbidden? And why was not *moral sincerity* as expressly required as circumcision?

If it be objected, that they were *all* expressly and strictly required to keep the passover; but if grace was requisite, and God knew that many of the partakers would have no grace, why would he give such universal orders?

I answer: When God gave those commands, he knew that the commands, in all their strictness, would reach many persons who in the time of the *passover* would be without so much as *moral sincerity* in religion. Every man in the nation, from the first institution till the death of Christ, were all (excepting such as were ceremonially unclean, or on a journey) strictly required to keep the feast of *passover;* and yet God knew that multitudes would be without the qualification of *moral seriousness* in religion. It would be very unreasonable to suppose, that every single person in the nation was morally serious, even in the very best time, or that ever there was such a happy day with any nation under heaven, wherein all were morally sincere in religion. How much then was it otherwise many times with that nation, which was so prone to corruption, and so often generally involved in gross wickedness? But the strict command of God to keep the *passover* reached the morally *insincere*, as well as others; they are no where excepted, any more than the *unconverted.* And as to any general commands of God's word, these no more required men to turn from a state of moral insincerity before they came to the *passover*, than they required them to turn from a graceless state.

But further, I reply, that God required them all to keep the *passover*, no more strictly than he required them all to *love* the Lord their God with their whole heart. And if God might strictly command this, he might also strictly command them to keep that ordinance wherein they were especially to profess it, and seal their profession of it. That *evil generation* were not expressly forbidden to keep the *passover*, in succeeding years, for the whole *forty years* during which they went on provoking God, very often by gross sin and open rebellion; but still the express and strict commands for the whole congregation to keep the *passover* reached them, nor were they released from their obligation.

If it be said, that we must suppose multitudes in Israel attended the *passover*, from age to age, without such a *visibility* of *piety* as I have insisted on; and yet we do not find their attending this ordinance charged on them as a *sin*, in Scripture: I answer; We must also suppose that multitudes in Israel, from age to age, attended the passover, who lived in *moral insincerity*, yea and *scandalous wickedness.* For the people in general very often notoriously corrupted themselves, and declined to ways of

open and great transgression; and yet there is reason to think, that in these times of corruption, for the most part, they held *circumcision* and the *passover:* and we do not find their attending on these ordinances under such circumstances, any more expressly charged on them as a sin, than their coming without piety of heart. The *ten tribes* continued constantly in *idolatry* for about 250 years, and there is a ground to suppose, that in the mean time they ordinarily kept up circumcision and the passover. For though they worshipped God by images, yet they maintained most of the ceremonial observances of the law of Moses, called *the manner of the God of the land*, which their priests taught the Samaritans, who were settled in their stead, 2 Kings xvii. 26, 27. Nevertheless we do not find Elijah, Elisha, or other prophets, reproving them for attending these ordinances without the required moral qualifications. Indeed there are some things in the writings of the prophets, which may be interpreted as a reproof of this; but no more as a reproof of this, than of attending God's ordinances without a gracious sincerity and true piety of heart and life.

How many seasons were there wherein the people in general fell into and lived in *idolatry*, that scandal of scandals, in the times of the judges, and of the kings both in Judah and Israel? But still amidst all this wickedness, they continued to attend the sacrament of *circumcision*. We have every whit as much evidence of it, as that they attended the *passover* without a profession of godliness. We have no account of their ever leaving it off at such seasons, nor any hint of its being renewed (as a thing which had ceased) when they came to reform. Though we have so full an account of the particulars of Josiah's reformation, after the long scandalous reign of Manasseh, there is no hint of any reviving of *circumcision*, or returning to it after a cessation. And where have we an account of the people being once reproved for attending this holy sacrament while thus involved in *scandalous* sin, in all the Old Testament? And where is this once charged on them as a sin, any more than in the case of unconverted persons attending the sacrament of the *passover*?*

Answ. 2. Whatever was the case with respect to the qualifications for the sacraments of the Old Testament dispensation, I humbly conceive it is nothing to the purpose in the present argument, nor needful to determine us with respect to the qualifications for the sacraments of the Christian dispensation, which is a matter of such plain fact in the New Testament. Far

* Let the Reader here take notice of what is observed in the conclusion of my answer to the objection from the instance of Judas.

am I from thinking the Old Testament to be like an old almanack out of use; nay, I think it is evident from the New Testament, that some things which had their first institution under the Old Testament, are continued under the New; for instance, the acceptance of the infant-seed of believers as children of the covenant with their parents; and probably some things belonging to the order and discipline of Christian churches, had their first beginning in the Jewish synagogue. But yet all allow that the Old Testament *dispensation* is out of date, with its ordinances; and I think, in a manner pertaining to the constitution and order of the *New Testament church*—a matter of fact, wherein the *New Testament* itself is express, full, and abundant —to have recourse to the Mosaic dispensation for rules or precedents to determine our judgment, is quite needless, and out of reason. There is perhaps no part of divinity attended with so much intricacy, and wherein orthodox divines do so much differ, as the stating of the precise agreement and difference between the two dispensations of Moses and of Christ.* And probably the reason why God has left it so intricate, is, because our understanding the ancient dispensation, and God's design in it, is not of so great importance, nor does it so nearly concern us.— Since God uses great plainness of speech in the New Testament, which is as it were the charter and municipal law of the Christian church, what need we run back to the ceremonial and typical institutions of an antiquated dispensation, wherein God's declared design was, to deliver divine things in comparative obscurity, hid under a veil, and involved in clouds?

We have no more occasion for going to search among the types, dark revelations, and carnal ordinances of the Old Testament, to find out whether this matter of fact concerning the constitution and order of the New Testament church be true, than we have occasion of going there to find out whether any other matter of fact, of which we have an account in the New Testament, be true; as particularly, whether there were such officers in the primitive church as *bishops* and *deacons*, whether *miraculous* gifts of the Spirit were common in the apostle's days, whether the believing Gentiles were received into the primitive Christian church, and the like.

Answer 3. I think, nothing can be alleged from the Holy Scripture, sufficient to prove a *profession of godliness* to be not a qualification requisite in order to a due and regular participation of the *passover*.

Although none of the requisite moral qualifications for this

* On this "precise agreement and difference," Dr. Owen has written with admirable clearness in his Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and the prefixed Exercitation.—W.

Jewish sacrament, are near so clearly made known in the Old Testament as the qualifications for the *Christian* sacraments are in the New ; and although a supposed visibility of either moral sincerity or sanctifying grace, is involved in some obscurity and difficulty ; yet I would humbly offer what appears to me to be the truth concerning that matter, in the things that follow.

(1.) Although the people in Egypt, before the *first passover*, probably made no *explicit* public profession at all, either of their *humiliation for their former idolatry*, or of *present devotedness of heart to God ;* it being before any particular institution of an express public profession, either of godliness, or repentance in case of scandal : Yet I think, there was some sort of *public manifestation*, or *implicit profession* of both.— Probably in Egypt they implicitly professed the same things, which they afterwards professed more expressly and solemnly in the wilderness. The Israelites in Egypt had very much to affect their hearts, before the last plague, in the great things that God had done for them ; especially in some of the latter plagues, wherein they were so remarkably distinguished from the Egyptians. They seem now to be brought to a tender frame, and a disposition to show much respect to God (see Exod. xii. 27 ;) and were probably now very forward to profess themselves devoted to him, and true penitents.

(2.) After the institution of an *explicit public profession* of devotedness to God, or (which is the same thing) of true piety of heart, this was wont to be required in order to a partaking of the *passover* and other sacrifices and sacraments that adult persons were admitted to. Accordingly all the adult persons that were circumcised at Gilgal, had made this profession a little before on the plains of Moab. Not that all of them were truly gracious ; but seeing they all had a profession and visibility, Christ in his dealings with his church as to external things, acted not as the Searcher of Hearts, but as the Head of the visible church, accommodating himself to the present state of mankind ; and therefore he represents himself in Scripture as *trusting* his people's profession ; as I formerly observed.

(3.) In *degenerate* times in Israel, both priests and people were very *lax* with respect to covenanting with God, and professing devotedness to him ; and these professions were used, as public professions commonly are still in corrupt times, merely as matters of *form* and *ceremony*, at least by great multitudes.

(4.) Such was the nature of the Levitical dispensation, that it had in no measure so great a tendency to preclude and prevent *hypocritical professions*, as the *New Testament dispensation ;* particularly, on account of the vastly greater *darkness* of it. For the covenant of grace was not then so fully revealed, and conse-

quently the nature of the conditions of that covenant was not then so well known. There was then a far more obscure revelation of those great duties of repentance towards God and faith in the Mediator, and of those things wherein true holiness consists and wherein it is distinguished from other things. Persons then had not equal advantage to know their own hearts, while viewing themselves in this comparatively dim light of Moses' law, as now they have in the clear sun-shine of the gospel. In that state of the minority of the church, the nature of true piety, as consisting in the *Spirit of adoption*, or ingenuous filial love to God, and as distinguished from a *spirit of bondage*, servile fear, and self-love, was not so clearly made known. The Israelites were therefore the more ready to mistake for true piety, that moral seriousness, and those warm affections and resolutions that resulted from that *spirit of bondage*, which showed itself in Israel remarkably at Mount Sinai; and to which through all the Old Testament times, they were especially incident.

(5.) God was pleased in a great measure *to suffer* (though he did not properly *allow*) a *laxness* among the people, with regard to the visibility of holiness, and the moral qualifications requisite to an attendance on their sacraments. This he also did in many other cases of great irregularity, under that dark, imperfect, and comparatively carnal dispensation; such as polygamy, putting away their wives at pleasure, the revenging of blood, killing the man-slayer, &c. And he *winked at* their worshipping in high places in Solomon's time, (1 Kings iii. 4, 5;) the neglect of keeping the feast of tabernacles according to the law, from Joshua's time till after the captivity, (Neh. viii. 17;) and the neglect of the synagogue-worship, or the public service of God in particular congregations, till after the captivity,* though the light of nature, together with the general rules of the law of Moses, did sufficiently teach and require it.

(6.) It seems to be foretold in the prophecies of the Old Testament, that there would be a great *alteration* in this respect, in the days of the gospel; that under the new dispensation there should be far *greater purity* in the church. Thus, in the forementioned place in Ezekiel it is foretold, that "those who are [*visibly*] uncircumcised in heart, should NO MORE enter into God's sanctuary." Again, Ezek. xx. 37, 38. "And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and will bring you into the bond of the covenant; and I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against me." It seems to be a prophecy of the greater purity of those who are visibly *in covenant with* God. Isa. iv. 3. "And it shall come to pass that he that is left

* *Prid. Connect.* Part I. p. 354—536, and 555, 556, 9th edit. The word translated *synagogues*, Psal. lxxiv. signifies *assemblies*; and is supposed by the generality of learned men to relate to another sort of assemblies.

in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living [i. e. *has a name to live*, or is enrolled among the saints] in Jerusalem." Isa. lii. 1. "Put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city; from henceforth there shall NO MORE come to thee the uncircumcised and the unclean." Zech. xiv. 21. "And in that day, there shall be NO MORE the Canaanite in the house of the Lord."

(7.) This is just such an alteration as might reasonably be expected from what we are taught of the whole *nature* of the *two dispensations*. As the one had *carnal ordinances*, (so they are called Heb. ix. 10,) the other a *spiritual* service, (John iv. 24;) the one an *earthly* Canaan, the other an *heavenly;* the one an *external* Jerusalem, the other a *spiritual;* the one an *earthly* high-priest, the other an *heavenly;* the one a *worldly* sanctuary, the other a *spiritual;* the one a *bodily* and *temporal* redemption, (which is all that they generally discerned or understood in the *passover*,) the other a *spiritual* and *eternal*. And agreeably to these things, it was so ordered in providence, that Israel, the congregation that should enter this *worldly* sanctuary, and attend these *carnal* ordinances, should be much more a *worldly, carnal* congregation, than the New Testament congregation. One reason of such a difference, seems to be this, viz. that the *Messiah* might have the honour of introducing a state of greater purity and spiritual glory. Hence God is said to find *fault* with that ancient dispensation of the covenant, Heb. viii. 7, 8. And the time of introducing the new dispensation is called the time of *reformation*, Heb. ix. 10. And one thing, wherein the amendment of what God found fault with in the former dispensation should consist, the apostle intimates, is the greater *purity* and *spirituality* of the church, Heb. viii. 7, 8, 11.

OBJECT. IV.

It is not reasonable to suppose, that the multitudes which John the Baptist baptized, made a *profession* of saving grace, or had any such *visibility* of true piety, as has been insisted on.

ANSW.—Those whom John baptized, *came to him confessing their sins*, making a profession of some kind of *repentance;* and it is not reasonable to suppose, the repentance they professed was specifically or in kind *diverse* from that which he had instructed them in, and called them to, which is called *repentance for the remission of sins;* and that is saving repentance. John's baptism is called *the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins:* I know not how such a phrase can be reasonably understood any otherwise, than so as to imply, that his *bap-*

tism was some exhibition of that *repentance*, and a seal of the profession of it. Baptism is a seal of some sort of religious profession, in adult persons: But the very name of John's baptism shews, that it was a seal of a profession of *repentance for the remission of sins.* It is said, Luke iii. 3, "John PREACHED the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins." What can be understood by this, but *his preaching* that men should now speedily *turn to God*, by true *repentance* and *faith* in the promised Saviour, and *come and confess their sins*, and openly declare this repentance towards God, and faith in the Lamb of God, and that they should confirm and seal this their profession by *baptism*, as well as therein receive the seal of God's willingness to *remit the sins* of such as had this faith and repentance. Accordingly, we are told, the *people came and were baptized of him, confessing their sins*, manifesting and professing that sort of *repentance* and *faith* which he *preached.* They had no notion of any *other sort* of repentance put into their heads, that they could suppose John *called* them to profess in *baptism*, but this, accompanied with *faith* in the Lamb whom he called them to behold; for he *preached* no other to them. The people that John baptized, professed both *repentance for the remission of sins*, and also *faith in the Messiah;* as is evident by Acts xix. 4, 5. "John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him that should come after him;" *i. e.* on *Christ Jesus:* "When they heard this [John's preaching] they were baptized in the name of the Lord *Jesus.*"

If it be objected here, that we are told, Matth. iii. 5, 6, "There went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins;" and that it is not to be imagined, *all* these made any credible profession of saving repentance and faith: I answer; No more is to be understood by these expressions, according to the phraseology of the Scripture, than that there was a very great resort of people from these places to John. Nor is any more to be understood by the like term of universality in John iii. 26. "They came to John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and ALL MEN come to him;" that is, there was a great resort to him from all quarters. It is in no wise unreasonable to suppose, there was indeed a very great number of people that came to John from the places mentioned, who being exceedingly moved by his preaching, in that time of extraordinary outpouring of the Spirit, made profession of the faith and repentance which John preached. Doubtless there were many more professors than real converts: But still in the great resort to John, there were many of the latter character; as we may infer from the prophecy: as appears by Luke i. 16, 17.

"And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." And from that account of fact in Mark xi. 12. "From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." And in Luke xvi. 16. "The law and the prophets were until John: Since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and *every man* presseth into it." Here the expression is no less universal, than that which is objected in Matth. iii. 5, 6. As to those wicked Pharisees, that so much opposed Christ, some of them I suppose had been baptized by John, and then had a great shew of repentance and faith; but they afterwards apostatized, and were much worse than ever before: Therefore Christ speaks of them as being like a *house* from *which the unclean spirit* is visibly turned out for *awhile*, and is *left empty, swept, and garnished*, but afterward is *repossessed*, and has many devils instead of one, Luke xi. 24, &c. Yet as to the greater part of these Pharisees, they were not baptized by John; as appears by Luke vii. 29, 30.

If it be further objected, that John in baptizing such multitudes could not have *time* to be sufficiently informed of those he baptized, whether their profession of godliness was *credible* or no: I answer; That we are not particularly informed of the circumstances of his teaching, and of the assistance he was favoured with, and the means he had of information concerning those whom he baptized: But we may be sure of one thing, viz. He had as much opportunity to inquire into the credibility of their profession, as he had to inquire into their *doctrinal* knowledge and *moral* character; which my opponents suppose to be necessary, as well as I: And this is enough to silence the present objection.

OBJECT. V.

Christ says, Matth. xx. 16, and again, chap. xxii. 14, that *many are called, but few are chosen.* By which it is evident, that there are *many*, who belong to the *visible church*, and yet but *few* real and true *saints;* and that it is ordinarily thus, even under the *New Testament*, and in days of gospel-light: And therefore that *visibility* of *saintship*, whereby persons are visible saints in a Scripture-sense, cannot imply an apparent probability of their being *real* saints, or truly gracious persons.

Answ. In these texts, by those that are *called*, are not meant those who are *visible saints*, and have the requisite qualifications for Christian sacraments; but all such as have the *external call* of the word of God, and have its offers and invita-

tions made to them. And it is undoubtedly true, and has been matter of fact, for the most part, that of those *called* in this sense, *many* have been but *only* called, and never truly obedient to the call, *few* have been true saints. So it was in the Jewish nation, to which the parable in the twentieth of Matthew has a special respect; in general, they had the *external call* of God's word, and attended many religious duties, in hopes of God's favour and reward, which is called *labouring in God's vineyard;* and yet but *few* of them eventually obtained salvation; nay, great multitudes of those who were *called* in this sense, were *scandalous* persons, and gross hypocrites. The Pharisees and Sadducees were *called*, and they *laboured in the vineyard*, in the sense of the parable; for which they expected great rewards, above the Gentile converts or proselytes; wherefore their *eye was evil* towards them, and they could not bear that they should be made *equal* to them. But still these Pharisees and Sadducees had not generally the intellectual and moral qualifications, that my opponents suppose requisite for *Christian* sacraments; being generally scandalous persons, denying some fundamental principles of religion, and explaining away some of its most important precepts. Thus, *many* in Christendom are called, by the outward call of God's word, and yet *few* of them are in a state of salvation: But not all who sit under the sound of the gospel, and hear its invitations, are fit to come to *sacraments.*

That by those who are *called*, in this saying of our Saviour, is meant those that have the *gospel-offer*, and not those who belong to the society of *visible saints*, is evident beyond all dispute, in Matth. xxii. 14. By the *many that are called*, are plainly intended the many that are *invited to the wedding.* In the foregoing parable, we have an account of those who from time to time were *bidden*, or CALLED, (for the word is the same in the original), ver. 3. "And sent forth his servants to CALL them that were CALLED [καλεσαι τους κεκλημενους,] and they would not come." This has respect to the Jews, who refused not only savingly to come to Christ, but refused so much as to come into the visible church of Christ. Ver. 4. "Again he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, [or CALLED,] Behold I have prepared my dinner," &c. Ver. 8. "They which were bidden [or CALLED] were not worthy." Ver. 9. "Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid [or CALL, καλεσατε] to the marriage," or nuptial banquet; representing the preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles; who upon it came into the *king's house*, i. e. the visible church, and among them *one that had not a wedding-garment, who was bound hand and foot, and cast out when the king came:* And then, at the conclusion, Christ adds this remark, ver. 14. "For many are CALLED *or* bidden [κλητοι,] but few are chosen;" which must have reference, not only to the *man* last mentioned, who came

into the wedding-house, the Christian visible church, *without a wedding-garment*, but to those also mentioned before, who were *called*, but would not so much as *come into the king's house*, or join to the visible Christian church. To suppose this saying to have reference only to that *one man* who came without *a wedding-garment*, (representing one that comes into the visible church, but is not a true saint,) would be to make the introduction of this aphorism, and its connection with what went before very strange and unintelligible, thus,—"*Multitudes* came into the king's house, who were *called*, and the house was full of guests; but among them was found *one* man who was not *chosen; for many are* called, *but few are* chosen."

OBJECT. VI.

When the servants of the householder, in the parable of the wheat and tares, (Matth. xiii.) unexpectedly found *tares* among the wheat, they said to their master, "Wilt thou that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay, lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them; let both grow together until the harvest." Which shews the mind of Christ, that we ought not to make a *distinction* between true saints and others in this world, or aim at admitting true saints *only* into the visible church, but ought to let *both* be *together* in the church till the day of *judgment.*

ANSW. 1. These things have no reference to *introduction* into the field, or *admission* into the visible church, as though no care nor measures should be taken to prevent *tares* being *sown;* or as though the servants who had the charge of the field, would have done well to have taken *tares*, appearing to be such, and *planted* them in the field amongst the wheat: No, instead of this the parable plainly implies the contrary. But the words cited have wholly respect to a CASTING OUT and purging the field, *after* the tares had been introduced *unawares*, and *contrary to design*, through men's infirmity and Satan's procurement.—Concerning purging the *tares* out of the field, or casting men out of the church, there is no difference between me and those whom I oppose in the present controversy: And therefore it is impossible there should be any objection from that which Christ says here concerning this matter against *me*, but what is as much of an objection against *them;* for we both hold the same thing. It is agreed on all hands, that adult persons, actually admitted to communion in the visible church, however they may behave themselves so as to bring their spiritual state into suspicion, yet ought not to be *cast out*, unless they are obstinate in *heresy* or

scandal; lest, while we go about to root out the *tares*, we should root out the *wheat* also. And it is also agreed on all hands, that when those represented under the name of *tares* bring forth such evil fruit, such scandalous and obstinate wickedness, as is plainly and visibly inconsistent with the being of true grace, they ought to be *cast out*. And therefore it is impossible that this objection should be any thing to the purpose.

ANSWER 2. I think this parable, instead of being a just objection *against* the doctrine I maintain, is on the contrary a clear evidence *for it*.

For, (1.) The parable shews plainly, that if any are introduced into the field of the householder, or church of Christ, who proves to be not *wheat* (*i. e.* not true saints,) they are brought in *unawares*, or contrary to design. If *tares* are as properly to be *sown* in the field as is the *wheat*, which must be the case if the Lord's supper be a *converting* ordinance; then surely no care ought to be taken to introduce *wheat* only, and no respect ought to be had more to the qualities of *wheat* in sowing the field, than the qualities of *tares;* nor is there any more impropriety in the *tares* having a place there, than the *wheat*.—But this surely is altogether inconsistent with the scope of the parable.

(2.) This parable plainly shews, that those who are in the visible church, have at first a *visibility*, or appearance to human sight of *true grace*, or of the nature of true saints. For it is observed, *tares* have this property, that when they first appear, and till the products of the field arrive to some maturity, they have such a resemblance of *wheat*, that it is next to impossible to *distinguish* them.

OBJECT. VII.

Christ himself administered the Lord's supper to Judas, whom he knew at the same time to be *graceless;* which is a full evidence, that grace is not *in itself* a requisite qualification in order to coming to the Lord's supper; and if it be not requisite in itself, a *profession* of it cannot be requisite.

ANSWER 1. It is to me apparent, that Judas was not present at the administration of the Lord's supper. It is true, he was present at the passover, and *dipped with Christ in the* paschal *dish*. The three former Evangelists do differ in the order of the account they give of this *dipping in the dish*.—Luke gives an account of it *after* his account of the Lord's supper, Luke xxii. 21. But Matthew and Mark both give an account of it *before*. (Matt. xxvi. 23, Mark xiv. 20.) And the like might be

shewn in other instances of these three Evangelists differing one from another in the *order* of their narratives; one places those things in his history after others, which another places first.—These sacred historians do not undertake to declare precisely the *date* of every incident, but regard more the truth of facts, than the order of time. However, in the present case, the nature of the thing speaks for itself, and shews, that Judas's *dipping with Christ in the dish*, or *his hand being with Christ on the table*, or *receiving a sop dipped in the dish*, must be in that order wherein Matthew and Mark place it in their history, viz. at the *passover*, antecedent to the Lord's supper. For there is no such thing in the Lord's supper as *dipping of sops*, and *dipping together in the dish;* but there was in the passover, where all had their hands together in the dish, and dipt their sops in the bitter sauce. None of these three evangelists give us any account of the time when Judas went out; but John—who is vastly more particular as to what passed that night, and is every where more exact as to the order of time than the other Evangelists—is very precise as to the time, viz. that *Jesus when he gave him the sop*, at the same time sent him away, bidding him *do quickly what he intended to do;* and accordingly, *when he had received the sop, he went immediately out*, John xiii. 27—30. Now this sop being at the *passover*, it is evident he was not present at the *Lord's supper* which followed. Many of the best expositors are of this opinion, such as Van Mastricht, Dr. Doddridge, and others.

Answer 2. If Judas was there I deny the consequence. As I have observed once and again concerning the Lord's dealings with his people under the Old Testament, so under the New the same observation takes place. Christ did not come to *judge the secrets of men*, nor did ordinarily act in his external dealings with his disciples, and in the administration of ordinances, as the *Searcher of Hearts;* but rather as the head of the visible church, proceeding according to what was exhibited in profession and visibility; herein setting an example to his ministers, who should stand in his place when he was gone, and act in his name in the administration of ordinances. Judas had made the same profession of regard to his master, and of forsaking all for him, as the other disciples: And therefore Christ did not openly renounce him till he himself had destroyed his profession and visibility of saintship, by public scandalous apostacy. Supposing then the presence of Judas at the Lord's supper, this affords no consequence in favour of what I oppose.

Answer 3. If they with whom I have to do in this con-

troversy are not contented with the answers already given, and think there is a remaining difficulty in this matter lying against *my scheme*, I will venture to tell them, that this difficulty lies full as hard against *their own scheme*: and if there be any strength at all in the argument, it is to all intents of the same strength against the need of those *qualifications* which they themselves suppose to be necessary in order to an approach to the Lord's table. For although they do not think renewing saving grace necessary, yet they suppose *moral seriousness*, or (as they variously speak) *moral sincerity* in religion to be necessary. They suppose it to be requisite, that persons should have some kind of serious principle and view in coming to the Lord's table; some intention of subjecting themselves to Christ, and of seeking and serving him, in general; and in particular some religious end in coming to the sacramental supper, some religious respect to Christ in it. But now did not Christ at that time perfectly know that Judas had none of these things? He knew he had nothing of *sincerity* in the Christian religion, or of regard to *Christ* in that ordinance, of any sort whatsoever; he knew that *Satan* had *entered into him* and filled his heart, and that he was then cherishing in himself a malignant spirit against his master, excited by the reproof Christ had lately given him, (compare John xii. 8, with Matt. xxvi. 8—16, and Mark xiv. 4—11) and that he had already formed a traitorous murderous design against him, and was now in the prosecution of that bloody design, having actually just before been to the chief priests, and agreed with them to *betray* him for thirty pieces of silver. (See Matt. xxvi. 14, 15, 16. Mark xiv. 10, 11. Luke xxii. 3—6, and John xiii. 2.)—Christ knew these things, and knew that Judas was utterly unqualified for the *holy* sacrament of the Lord's supper; though it had not yet been made known to the church or the disciples. Therefore it concerns those on the contrary part in this controversy, to find out some solution of this difficulty, as much as it does me; and they will find they have as much need to take refuge in the solution already given, in one or other of the two preceding answers to this objection.

By the way I would observe, that Christ's not excluding Judas from the passover, under these circumstances, *knowing* him to be thus unqualified, without so much as *moral sincerity*, &c. is another thing that effectually enervates all the strength of the objection against me, from the *passover*. For Judas did not only in common with others fall under God's strict command, in the law of Moses, to keep this feast, without any exception of his case there to be found; but *Christ* himself, with his own hand, gave him the *sop*, a part of the paschal feast; even although at the same instant he had in view the man's secret wickedness and hypocrisy, the traitorous design which was then in his heart.

and the horrid conspiracy with the chief priests, which he had already entered into, and was now prosecuting. This was then in Christ's mind, and he intimated it to him, at the same moment when he gave him the sop, saying, *What thou doest, do quickly.* This demonstrates, that the objection from the *passover* is no stronger argument against my scheme, than the scheme of those whom I oppose; because it is no stronger against the necessity of *sanctifying grace*, the qualification for Christian sacraments, which I insist upon, than it is against the necessity of *moral seriousness* or *sincerity*, the qualification which they insist upon.

OBJECT. VIII.

If *sanctifying grace* be a requisite qualification in order to due access to Christian sacraments, God would have given some *certain rule*, whereby those who are to admit them, might know whether they have such grace, or not.

ANSWER. This objection was obviated in my stating the question. However, I will say something further to it in this place; and would observe, that if there be any strength in this objection, it lies in the truth of this proposition, viz. *That whatever qualifications are requisite in order to persons' due access to Christian sacraments, God has given some* certain rule, *whereby those who admit them, may know whether they have those qualifications or not.* If this proposition is not true, then there is no force at all in the argument. But I dare say, there is not a divine, nor Christian of common sense, on the face of the earth, that will assert and stand to it, that this proposition is true. For none will deny, that some sort of belief of the being of a God, some sort of belief that the Scriptures are the word of God, that there is a future state of rewards and punishments, and that Jesus is the Messiah, are qualifications requisite in order to a due access to Christian sacraments; and yet God has given those who are to admit persons no *certain rule*, whereby they may know whether they *believe* any one of these things. Neither has he given his ministers or churches any *certain rule*, whereby they may know whether any person that offers himself for admission to the sacrament, has any degree of *moral sincerity*, *moral seriousness* of spirit, or any inward moral qualification whatsoever. These things have all their existence in the soul, which is out of our neighbour's view. Not therefore a *certainty*, but a *profession*, and *visibility* of these things, must be the rule of the church's proceeding; and it is as good and as reasonable a rule of judgment concerning *saving grace*, as it is concerning any other

internal invisible qualifications, which cannot be certainly known by any but the subject himself.

OBJECT. IX.

If *sanctifying grace* be requisite to a due approach to the Lord's table, then no man may come but he that *knows* he has such grace. A man must not only *think* he has a right to the Lord's supper, in order to his lawful partaking of it; but he must *know* he has a right. If nothing but *sanctification* gives him a *real right* to the Lord's supper, then nothing short of the *knowledge* of sanctification gives him a *known right* to it: Only an *opinion* and *probable hopes* of a right will not warrant his coming.

ANSWER I. I desire those who insist on this as an invincible argument, to consider calmly whether they themselves ever *did*, or ever *will* stand to it. For here these two things are to be observed:

(1.) If no man may warrantably come to the Lord's supper, but such as *know* they have a *right*, then no *unconverted* persons may come unless they not only *think*, but *know* it is the *mind of God*, that unconverted persons should come, and *know* that he does not require *grace* in order to their coming. For unless they know that men may come *without grace*, they cannot *know* that they themselves have a right to come, *being without grace*. And will any one assert and stand to it, that of necessity all adult persons, of every age, rank, and condition of life, must be so versed in this controversy, as to have a certainty in this matter, in order to their coming to the Lord's supper? It would be most absurd for any to assert it to be a point of easy proof, the evidence of which is so clear and obvious to every one of every capacity, as to supersede all occasion for their being studied in divinity, in order to a certainty of its truth, that persons may come to the sacred table of the Lord, notwithstanding they *know* themselves to be *unconverted!* Especially considering, that the contrary to this opinion has been in general the judgment of Protestant divines and churches, from the Reformation to this day; and that the most of the greatest divines that have ever appeared in the world, who have spent their lives in the diligent prayerful study of divinity, have been fixed in the reverse of that opinion. This is sufficient at least to shew, that this opinion is not so plain as not to be a disputable point; and that the evidence of it is not so obvious to persons of the lowest capacity and little inquiry, as that all may come to a certainty in the matter, with-

out difficulty and without study. I would humbly ask here, What has been the case in fact in *our* churches, who have practised for so many years on this principle? Can it be pretended, or was it ever supposed, that the communicants in general, even persons of mean intellects and low education, not excepting the very boys and girls of sixteen years old, that have been taken into the church, had so studied divinity, as not only to *think*, but *know*, that our pious forefathers, and almost all the Protestant and Christian divines in the world, have been in an *error* in this matter? And have people ever been taught the *necessity* of this previous knowledge? Has it ever been insisted upon, that before persons come to the Lord's supper, they must look so far into the case of a *right* to the Lord's supper, as to come not only to a full settled opinion, but even *certainty* in this point! And has any one minister or church in their admissions ever proceeded on the supposition, that all whom they took into communion were so versed in this controversy, as this comes to? Has it ever been the manner to examine them as to their thorough acquaintance with this particular controversy? Has it been the manner to put by those who had only an opinion and not a certainty; even as the *priests* who could not find their *register*, were put by, till the matter could be determined by Urim and Thummim? And I dare appeal to every minister, and every member of a church that has been concerned in admitting communicants, whether they ever imagined, or it ever entered into their thought, concerning each one to whose admission they have consented, that they had looked so much into this matter, as not only to have settled their *opinion*, but to be arrived to a proper *certainty?*

(2.) I desire it may be remembered, that the venerable author of the *Appeal to the Learned*, did in his ministry ever teach such doctrine from whence it will unavoidably follow, that no one *unconverted* man in the world can *know* he has a warrant to come to the Lord's supper. For if any unconverted man has a warrant to worship his Maker in this way, it must be because God has given him such warrant by the revelation of his mind in the holy Scriptures. And therefore if any unconverted man, not only *thinks*, but *knows*, he has a warrant from God, he must of consequence, not only *think*, but *know*, that the Scriptures are the word of God. But I believe all that survive of the stated hearers of that eminent divine, and all who were acquainted with him, well remember it to be a doctrine which he often taught and much insisted on, that no natural man *knows* the Scripture to be the word of God; that although such may *think* so, yet they do not *know* it; and that at best they have but a *doubtful opinion:* And he often would express himself thus; *No natural man is thoroughly convinced, that the Scriptures are the word of*

God; if they were convinced, they would be gained. Now if so, it is impossible any natural man in the world should ever *know*, it is his right, in his present condition, to come to the Lord's supper. True, he may *think* it is his right, he may have that *opinion:* But he cannot *know* it; and so must not come, according to this argument. For it is only the *word of God* in the holy Scriptures, that gives a man a *right* to worship the Supreme Being in this sacramental manner, and to come to him in this way, or any other, as one in covenant with him. The Lord's supper being no branch of natural worship, reason without institution is no ground of duty or right in this affair. And hence it is plainly impossible for those that do not so much as *know* the Scriptures are the word of God, to *know* they have any good ground of duty or right in this matter. Therefore, supposing unconverted men have a real right, yet since they have no *known* right, they have no warrant (according to the argument before us) to take and use their right; and what good then can their right do them? Or how can they excuse themselves from presumption, in claiming a *right*, which they do not *know* belongs to them?—It is said, a *probable hope* that persons are regenerate, will not warrant them to come; if they come, they take a liberty to do that which they do not *know* God gives them leave to do, which is horrible presumption in them. But if this be good arguing, I may as well say, a *probable opinion* that unregenerate men may communicate, will not warrant such to do it. They must have *certain knowledge* of this; else, their *right* being uncertain, they run a dreadful venture in coming.

Answer 2. Men are liable to doubt concerning their *moral sincerity*, as well as saving grace. Suppose an unconverted man, sensible of his being under the reigning power of sin, was about to appear solemnly to *own the covenant* (as it is commonly called) and to profess to give up himself to the service of God in an universal and persevering obedience; and suppose at the same time he knew, that if he sealed this profession at the Lord's supper, without *moral sincerity*, (supposing him to understand the meaning of that phrase,) he should *eat and drink judgment* to himself; and if accordingly, his conscience being awakened, he was *afraid of God's judgment;* in this case, I believe, the man would be every whit as liable to doubts about his *moral sincerity*, as godly men are about their gracious sincerity. And if it be not matter of fact, that natural men are so often exercised and troubled with doubts about their *moral sincerity*, as godly men are about their regeneration, I suppose it to be owing only to this cause, viz. that godly men being of more tender consciences than those under the dominion of sin, are more afraid of God's judgments, and more ready to tremble at his

word. The divines on the other side of the question, suppose it to be requisite, that communicants should believe the fundamental doctrines of religion *with all their heart*, (in the sense of Acts viii. 37 ;) the doctrine of *Three Persons and One God*, in particular. But I think there can be no reasonable doubt, that natural men—who have so weak and poor a kind of faith in these mysteries—if they were indeed as much afraid of the terrible consequences of their being deceived in being not *morally sincere* in their profession of the truth, as truly gracious men are wont to be of delusion concerning their experience of a work of grace—or whether they are evangelically sincere in choosing God for their portion—the former would be as frequently exercised with doubts in the one case, as the latter in the other. And I very much question, whether any divine on the other side of the controversy would think it necessary, that natural men in professing those things should mean that they *know* they are *morally sincere*, or intend any more than that they trust they have that sincerity, so far as they know their own hearts. If a man should come to them, proposing to join with the church, and tell them, though indeed he was something afraid whether he believed the doctrine of the Trinity *with all his heart*, (meaning in a moral sense,) yet that he had often *examined* himself as to that matter with the utmost impartiality and strictness he was capable of, and on the whole he found reasons of probable hope, and his preponderating thought of himself was, that he was *sincere* in it ; would they think such an one ought to be rejected, or would they advise him not to come to the sacrament, because he did not certainly *know* he had this sincerity, but only *thought* he had it ?

ANSW. 3. If we suppose sanctifying grace requisite in order to be properly qualified, according to God's word, for an attendance on the Lord's supper ; yet it will not follow, that a man must *know* he has this qualification, in order to his being capable of *conscientiously* attending it. If he *judges* that he has it, according to the best light he can obtain, on the most careful examination, with the improvement of such helps as he can get, the advice of his pastor, &c. he may be bound in *conscience* to attend. And the reason is this ; Christians partaking of the Lord's supper is not a matter of mere *claim*, or *right* and *privilege*, but a matter of *duty* and *obligation ;* being an affair wherein God has a *claim* and *demand on us.* And as we ought to be careful, on the one hand, that we proceed on good grounds in taking to ourselves a privilege, lest we take what we have no good claim to ; so we should be equally careful, on the other hand, to proceed on good grounds in what we withhold from another, lest we do not withhold that from him which is his due,

and which he justly challenges from us. Therefore in a case of this complex nature, where a thing is both a matter of right or privilege to us, and also a matter of obligation to another, or a right of his from us, the danger of proceeding without right and truth is equal both ways; and consequently, if we cannot be absolutely sure either way, here the best judgment we can form, after all proper endeavours to know the truth, must govern and determine us; otherwise we shall designedly do that whereby, according to our own judgment, we run the greatest risk; which is certainly contrary to reason. If the question were only what a man has a right to, he might forbear till he were sure: But the question is, not only whether *he* has right to attend the supper, but whether *God* also has not a right to his attendance there? Supposing it were merely a privilege which I am allowed but not commanded, in a certain *specified case;* then, supposing I am uncertain whether *that be the case with me or no*, it will be safest to abstain. But supposing I am not only forbidden to take it, unless that be the case with me, but positively commanded and required to take it, if that be the case in fact, then it is equally dangerous to *neglect* on uncertainties, as to *take* on uncertainties. In such a critical situation, a man must act according to the best of his judgment on his case; otherwise he wilfully runs into that which he thinks the greatest danger of the two.

Thus it is in innumerable cases in human life. I shall give one plain instance: A man ought not to take upon him the work of the *ministry*, unless *called* to it in the providence of God; for a man has no right to *take this honour to himself, unless called of God.* Now let us suppose a young man, of a liberal education, and well accomplished, to be at a loss whether it is the will of God that he should follow the work of the ministry; and he examines himself, and examines his circumstances, with great seriousness and solemn prayer, and well considers and weighs the appearances in divine providence: And yet when he has done all, he is not come to a proper certainty, that God calls him to this work; but however, it looks so to him, according to the best light he can obtain, and the most careful judgment he can form: Now such an one appears *obliged in conscience* to give himself to this work. He must by no means neglect it, under a notion that he must not take this honour to himself, till he knows he has a right to it; because, though it be indeed a privilege, yet it is not a matter of *mere* privilege, but a matter of duty too; and if he neglects it under these circumstances, he neglects what, according to his own best judgment, he *thinks* God requires of him, and calls him to; which is to sin against his conscience.

As to the case of the priests, that could not find their regis-

ter, (Ezra ii.) alleged in the *Appeal to the Learned*, p. 64, it appears to me of no force in this argument; for if those priests had never so great *assurance* in themselves of their pedigree being good, or of their being descended from priests, and should have *professed* such assurance, yet it would not have availed. Nor did they abstain from the priesthood, because they wanted satisfaction themselves, but they were subject to the judgment of the Sanhedrim. God had never made any profession of the parties themselves, but the visibility of the thing, and evidence of the fact to their own eyes, as the rule to judge of the qualification: this matter of pedigree being an external object, ordinarily within the view of man; and not any qualification of heart. But this is not the case with regard to requisite qualifications for the Lord's supper. These being many of them internal visible things, seated in the mind and heart, such as the *belief* of a Supreme Being, &c. God has made a credible *profession* of these things the rule to direct in admission of persons to the ordinance. In making this profession they are determined and governed by their own judgment of themselves, and not by any thing within the view of the church.

OBJECT. X.

The natural consequence of the doctrine which has been maintained, is the bringing multitudes of persons of a *tender conscience* and true piety into great *perplexities;* who being at a loss about the state of their souls, must needs be as much in suspense about their duty: And it is not reasonable to suppose, that God would order things so in the revelations of his will, as to *bring his own people into such perplexities.*

Answ. 1. It is for *want* of the like tenderness of conscience which the godly have, that the other doctrine which insists on moral sincerity, does not naturally bring those who are received to communion on those principles, into the same perplexities, through their doubting of their moral sincerity, of their believing mysteries with all their heart, &c. as has been already observed. And being *free* from perplexity, only through *stupidity* and hardness of heart, is *worse* than being in the greatest perplexity through tenderness of conscience.

Answ. 2. Supposing the doctrine which I have maintained, be indeed the doctrine of God's word, yet it will not follow, that the perplexities true saints are in through doubting of their state, are effects owing to the revelations of God's word. Per-

plexity and distress of mind, not only on occasion of the Lord's supper, but innumerable other occasions, is the natural and unavoidable consequence of true Christians doubting of their state. But shall we therefore say, that all these perplexities are owing to the word of God? No, it is not owing to God, nor to any of his revelations, that true saints ever doubt of their state; his revelations are plain and clear, and his rules sufficient for men to determine their own condition by. But, for the most part, it is owing to their own *sloth*, and giving way to their *sinful* dispositions. Must God's institutions and revelations be answerable for all the perplexities men bring on themselves, through their own negligence and unwatchfulness? It is wisely ordered that the saints should escape perplexity in no other way than that of great strictness, diligence, and maintaining the lively, laborious, and self-denying exercises of religion.

It might as well be said, it is unreasonable to suppose that God should order things so as to bring his own people into such perplexities, as doubting saints are wont to be exercised with, in the sensible approaches of death; when their doubts tend to vastly greater perplexity, than in their approaches to the Lord's table. If Christians would more thoroughly *exercise themselves unto godliness*, labouring always to *keep a conscience void of offence both towards God and towards man*, it would be the way to have the comfort and taste the sweetness of religion. If they would *so run, not as uncertainly; so fight, not as they that beat the air;* it would be the way for them to escape perplexity, both in ordinances and providences, and to rejoice and enjoy God in both.—Not but that doubting of their state sometimes arises from other causes, besides want of watchfulness; it may arise from melancholy, and some other peculiar disadvantages. But however, it is not owing to God's revelations nor institutions; which, whatsoever we may suppose them to be, will not prevent the perplexities of *such* persons.

Answ. 3. It appears to me reasonable to suppose, that the doctrine I maintain, if universally embraced by God's people—however it might be an accidental occasion of perplexity in many instances, through their own infirmity and sin—would, on the whole, be a happy occasion of much more *comfort* to the saints than trouble, as it would have a tendency, on every return of the Lord's supper, to put them on the strictest examination and trial of the state of their souls, agreeable to that rule of the apostle, I Cor. xi. 28. The *neglect* of which great duty of frequent and thorough *self-examination*, seems to be one main cause of the darkness and perplexity of the saints, and the reason why they have so little comfort in ordinances, and so little comfort in general.—Mr. Stoddard often taught his people, that *assurance* is

attainable, and that those who are true saints might know it, if they would; *i. e.* if they would use proper means and endeavours in order to it.—And if so, then certainly it is not just, to charge those perplexities on *God's institutions*, which arise through *men's negligence;* nor would it be just on the supposition of God's institutions being such as I suppose them to be.

OBJECT. XI.

You may as well say, that unsanctified persons may not attend *any* duty of divine worship whatsoever, as that they may not attend the Lord's supper; for all duties of worship are *holy* and *require holiness*, in order to an acceptable performance of them, as well as that.

ANSWER. If this argument has any foundation at all, it has its foundation in the supposed truth of the following *propositions*, viz. *Whosoever is qualified for admission to one duty of divine worship, is qualified for admission to all;* and *he that is unqualified for one, and may be forbidden one, is unqualified for all, and ought to be allowed to attend none.* But certainly these propositions are not true. There are many *qualified* for some duties of worship, and may be *allowed* to attend them, who yet are *not* qualified for some others, nor by any means to be admitted to them. As every body grants, the unbaptized, the excommunicated, heretics, scandalous livers, &c. may be admitted to hear the *word* preached; nevertheless they are not to be allowed to come to the Lord's supper. Even excommunicated persons remain still under the law of the Sabbath, and are not to be forbidden to observe the Lord's day. Ignorant persons, such as have not knowledge sufficient for an approach to the Lord's table, yet are not excused from the duty of prayer: They may pray to God to instruct them, and assist them in obtaining knowledge. They who have been educated in Arianism and Socinianism, and are not yet brought off from these fundamental errors, and so are by no means to be admitted to the Lord's supper, yet may pray to God to assist them in their studies, and guide them into the truth, and for all other mercies which they need. Socrates, that great Gentile philosopher, who worshipped the true God, as he was led by the light of nature, might pray to God, and he attended his duty when he did so; although he knew not the revelation which God had made of himself in his word. That great philosopher, Seneca, who was contemporary with the apostle Paul, held one Supreme Being, and had in many respects right notions of the divine perfections and providence, though

he did not embrace the gospel, which at that day was preached in the world; yet might pray to that Supreme Being whom he acknowledged. And if his brother Gallio at Corinth, when Paul preached there, had prayed to this Supreme Being to guide him into the truth, that he might know whether the doctrine Paul preached was true, he therein would have acted very becoming a reasonable creature, and any one would have acted unreasonably in forbidding him; but yet surely neither of these men was qualified for the Christian sacraments. So that it is apparent, there is and ought to be a *distinction* made between duties of worship, with respect to qualifications for them; and that which is a sufficient qualification for admission to one duty, is not so for all. And therefore the position is not true, which is the foundation whereon the whole weight of this argument rests. To say, that although it be true there ought to be a distinction made, in admission to duties of worship, with regard to some qualifications, yet sanctifying grace is not one of those qualifications that make the difference; would be but a giving up the argument, and a perfect begging the question.

It is said, there can be *no reason* assigned, why unsanctified persons may attend *other* duties of worship, and not the *Lord's supper*. But I humbly conceive this must be an inadvertence. For there is a reason very obvious from that necessary and very notable *distinction* among duties of worship, which follows:

1. There are *some duties* of worship, that imply a *profession of God's covenant;* whose very nature and design is an exhibition of those vital active principles and inward exercises, wherein consists the *condition of the covenant of grace*, or that union of soul to God, which is the union between Christ and his spouse, entered into by an inward hearty consenting to that covenant. Such are the Christian *sacraments*, whose very design is to make and confirm a *profession* of compliance with that covenant, and whose very nature is to exhibit or express the uniting acts of the soul: Those sacramental duties therefore cannot be attended by any whose hearts do not really consent to that covenant, and whose souls do not truly close with Christ, without either their being self-deceived, or else wilfully making a false profession, and lying in a very aggravated manner.

2. There are *other duties*, which are *not* in their own nature an exhibition of a *covenant-union* with God, or of any compliance with the condition of the *covenant of grace;* but are the expression of *general virtues*, or virtues in their largest extent, including both special and common. Thus *prayer*, or asking mercy of God, is in its own nature *no* profession of a compliance with the *covenant* of grace. It is an expression of some belief of the being of a God, some sense of our wants, and of a need of God's help, some sense of our dependence, &c. but not

merely such a sense of these things as is spiritual and saving. Indeed there are some prayers proper to be made by *saints*, and many things proper to be expressed by them in prayer, which imply the profession of a spiritual union of heart to God through Christ; but such as no Heathen, no heretic, nor natural man whatever, can or ought to make. Prayer in general, and asking mercy and help from God, is no more a profession of consent to the *covenant* of grace, than reading the Scriptures, or meditation, or performing any duty of morality and natural religion. A Mahometan may as well ask mercy, as hear instruction: And any natural man may as well express his desires to God, as hear when God declares his will to him. It is true, when an unconverted man prays, the *manner* of his doing it is sinful: But when a natural man, knowing himself to be so, comes to the Lord's supper, the very *matter* of what he does in respect of the profession he there makes, and his pretension to lay hold of God's covenant, is a *lie*, and a lie told in the most solemn manner.

In a word, the venerable Mr. Stoddard himself, in his *Doctrine of Instituted Churches*, has taught us to distinguish between *instituted* and *natural* acts of religion: The *word* and prayer he places under the head of moral duty, and considers as *common* to all; but the *sacraments*, according to what he says there, being *instituted*, are of *special* administration, and must be *limited* agreeable to the institution.

OBJECT. XII.

The Lord's supper has a proper *tendency* to promote men's *conversion*, being an affecting representation of the greatest and most important things of God's word: It has a proper *tendency* to awaken and humble sinners; here being a discovery of the terrible anger of God for sin, by the infliction of the curse upon Christ, when sin was imputed to him; and the representation here made of the dying love of Christ has a *tendency* to draw the hearts of sinners from sin to God, &c.

Answer. Unless it be an evident truth, that *what the Lord's supper may have tendency to promote, the same it was appointed to promote*, nothing follows from this argument. If the argument affords any consequence, the consequence is built on the *tendency* of the Lord's supper. And if the consequence be good and strong on this foundation, as drawn from such premises, then wherever the *premises hold*, the *consequence* holds; otherwise it must appear, that the *premises* and *consequence* are not connected. And now let us see how it is in *fact*. Do not

scandalous persons need to have these very effects wrought in their hearts which have been mentioned? Yes, surely; they need them in a special manner: they need to be awakened; they need to have an affecting discovery of that terrible wrath of God against sin, which was manifested in a peculiar manner by the terrible effects of God's wrath in the sufferings of his own incarnate Son. Gross sinners need this in some respect more than others. They need to have their hearts broken by an affecting view of the great and important things of God's word. They need especially to fly to Christ for refuge, and therefore need to have their hearts drawn. And seeing the *Lord's supper* has so great a *tendency* to promote these things, if the consequence from the *tendency* of the Lord's supper, as inferring the end of its *appointment*, be good, then it must be a consequence also well inferred, that the Lord's supper was appointed for the reclaiming and bringing to repentance *scandalous* persons.

To turn this off, by saying, *Scandalous persons are expressly forbid*, is but giving up the argument, and begging the question. It is giving up the argument; since it allows the *consequence* not to be good. For it allows, that notwithstanding the proper *tendency* of the Lord's supper to promote a design, yet it may be the Lord's supper was not appointed with a view to promote that end. And it is a begging the question; since it supposes, that *unconverted men are not evidently forbidden*, as well as scandalous persons; which is the thing in controversy. If they be *evidently* forbid, that is as much to reasonable creatures (who need nothing but good evidence) as if they were *expressly* forbidden.—To say here, that the *Lord's supper is a converting ordinance only to orderly members*, and that *there is another ordinance appointed for bringing scandalous persons to repentance*, this is no solution of the difficulty; but is only another instance of yielding up the argument, and begging the question. For it plainly concedes, that the *tendency* of an ordinance does not prove it *appointed* to all the ends, which it seems to have a tendency to promote; and also supposes, that there is not any *other* ordinance, appointed for converting sinners that are moral and orderly in their lives, *exclusive of this*, which is the thing in question.

It is at best but very precarious arguing, from the seeming *tendency* of things, to the *divine appointment*, or God's will and disposition with respect to the *use* of those things. Would it not have had a great *tendency* to convince the Scribes and Pharisees, and to promote their conversion, if they had been admitted into the mount when Christ was *transfigured?* But yet it was not the will of Christ, that they should be admitted there, or any other but Peter, James, and John. Would it not have had a very great *tendency* to convince and bring to repentance the unbe-

lieving Jews, if they had been allowed to see and converse freely with Christ after his *resurrection*, and see him *ascend* into heaven? But yet it was the will of God, that none but *disciples* should be admitted to these privileges. Might it not have had a good *tendency*, if *all* that were sincere followers of Christ, women as well as men, had been allowed to be *present* at the institution of the *Lord's supper?* But yet it is commonly thought none were admitted besides the apostles.

Indeed, the ever honoured author of the *Appeal to the Learned* has supplied me with the true and proper answer to this objection, in the following words, p. 27, 28. "The efficacy of the Lord's supper does depend upon the blessing of God.—*Whatever* TENDENCY *ordinances have in their* OWN NATURE *to be serviceable* to men, yet they will not prevail any further than God doth bless them. *The weapons of our warfare are mighty through God*, 2 Cor. x. 4. It is God that teaches men to profit, and makes them profitable and serviceable to men's souls. There is reason to hope for a divine blessing on the *Lord's supper*, when it is administered to those that it *ought* to be administered to; God's *blessing* is to be expected in God's *way*. If men act according to their own humours and fancies, and do not keep in the way of *obedience*, it is presumption to expect God's blessing, Matt. xv. 9. *In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.* But when *they* are admitted to the Lord's supper that *God would have to be* admitted, there is ground to hope that he will make it profitable."

OBJECT. XIII.

All that are members of the *visible church* and in the *external covenant*, and neither ignorant nor scandalous, are commanded to perform all *external covenant duties;* and particularly they are commanded to attend the *Lord's supper*, in those words of Christ, *This do in remembrance of me.*

ANSWER. This argument is of no force, without first taking for granted the very thing in question. For this is plainly supposed in it, that however these commands are given to such as are in the *external covenant*, yet they are given *indefinitely*, but with exceptions and reserves, and do not immediately reach *all* such; they do not reach those who are unqualified, though they be in the *external covenant.* Now the question is, *Who* are these that are *unqualified?* The objection supposes, that only *ignorant and scandalous* persons are so. But *why* are they only supposed unqualified; and not *unconverted* persons too?

Because it is taken for granted, that these are *not* unqualified. And thus the grand point in question is supposed, instead of being proved. Why are these limitations only singled out, *neither ignorant nor scandalous;* and not others as well? The answer must be, because these are *all* the limitations which the scripture makes: But this now is the very thing in question. Whereas, the business of an argument is to *prove*, and not to suppose, or take for granted, the very thing which is to be proved.

If it be here said, It is with good reason that those who are *ignorant* or *scandalous* alone are supposed to be excepted in God's command, and obligations of the *covenant;* for the covenant spoken of in the objection, is the *external covenant*, and this requires only *external duties*; which alone are what lie within the reach of man's *natural power*, and so in the reach of his *legal power*: God does not command or require what men have no natural power to perform, and which cannot be performed before something else, some antecedent duty, is performed, which antecedent duty is not in their natural power.

I reply, Still things are but *supposed*, which should be proved, and which want confirmation.

(1.) It is *supposed*, that those who have *externally* (i. e. by oral profession and promise) entered into God's covenant, are thereby obliged to no more than the external duties of that covenant: Which is not proved, and, I humbly conceive, is certainly not the true state of the case. They who have *externally* entered into God's covenant, are by external profession and engagements entered into that one only *covenant of grace*, which the scripture informs us of; and therefore are obliged to fulfil the duties of *that* covenant, which are chiefly internal. The children of Israel, when they *externally* entered into covenant with God at Mount Sinai, promised to perform all the duties of the covenant, to obey all the *ten commandments* spoken by God in their hearing, and written in tables of stone, which were therefore called *The Tables of the Covenant;* the sum of which ten commands was, *to love the Lord their God with all their heart, and with all their soul, and to love their neighbour as themselves;* which principally at least are *internal* duties. In particular, they promised *not to covet;* which is an *internal* duty.—They promised to *have no other God before the Lord;* which implied, that they would in their hearts regard no other being or object whatever above God, or in equality with him, but would give him their supreme respect.

(2.) It is *supposed*, that God does not *require impossibilities* of men, in this sense, that he does not require those things of them which are out of their *natural* power, and particularly that he does not require them to be *converted*. But this is not

proved; nor can I reconcile it with the tenor of the scripture revelation. And the chief advocates for the doctrine I oppose, have themselves abundantly asserted the contrary. The venerable author forementioned, as every body knows that knew him, always taught, that God justly requires men to be *converted*, to repent of their sins, and turn to the Lord, to close with Christ, and savingly to believe in him; and that in refusing to accept of Christ and turn to God, they disobeyed the divine *commands*, and were guilty of the most heinous sin; and that their moral *inability* was no excuse.

(3.) It is *supposed*, that God does not command men to do those things which are not to be done till *something else* is done, that is not within the reach of men's *natural ability*. This also is not proved; nor do I see how it can be true, even according to the principles of those who insist on this objection. The forementioned memorable divine ever taught, that God commandeth natural men without delay to *believe* in Christ: And yet he always held, that it was impossible for them to believe till they had by a *preceding* act submitted to the *sovereignty* of God; and yet he held, that men never could do this of *themselves*, till humbled and bowed by powerful convictions of God's Spirit. Again, he taught, that God commandeth natural men to *love* him with all their heart: And yet he held, that this could not be till men had first *believed* in Christ; the exercise of love being a fruit of faith; and believing in Christ, he supposed not to be within the reach of man's *natural* ability. Further, he held, that God requireth of all men holy, spiritual, and acceptable *obedience;* and yet that such obedience is not within the reach of their *natural ability;* and not only so, but that there must be *love* to God, before there could be new obedience, and that this love to God is not within the reach of men's *natural ability*. Yet, before this love there must be *faith*, which faith is not within the reach of man's *natural power:* and still, before faith there must be the *knowledge* of God, which knowledge is not in *natural* men's reach: And, once more, even before the knowledge of God there must be a thorough *humiliation*, which humiliation men could not work in themselves by any natural power of their own. Now, must it needs be thought, notwithstanding all these *unreasonable* things, that God should *command* those whom he has nourished and brought up, to honour him by giving an open testimony of *love* to him; only because wicked men cannot *testify* love till they *have* love, and love is not in their *natural power?* And is it any good *excuse* in the sight of God, for one who is under the highest obligations to him, and yet refuses him suitable honour by openly *testifying* his love of him, to plead that he has no love to testify; but on the contrary, has an infinitely unreasonable hatred? God may most reasonably require a proper testi-

mony and profession of love to him; and yet it may also be reasonable to suppose, at the same time, he forbids men to lie; or to declare that they have love, when they have none: Because, though it be supposed, that God requires men to testify love to him, yet he requires them to do it in a right way, and in the true order, *viz.* first *loving him*, and then *testifying* their love.

(4.) I do not see how it can be true, that a natural man has not a *legal* power to be converted, accept of Christ, love God, &c. By a *legal power* to do a thing, is plainly meant such power as brings a person properly within the reach of a *legal obligation*, or the obligation of a law or command to do that thing. But he that has such natural faculties, as render him a proper subject of moral government, may properly be *commanded* and put under the obligation of a *law* to do things so reasonable; notwithstanding any native aversion and moral inability in him to do his duty, arising from the power of sin. This, also, I must observe, was a known doctrine of Mr. Stoddard's, and what he ever taught.

OBJECT. XIV.

Either *unsanctified* persons may lawfully come to the Lord's supper, or it is unlawful for them to *carry themselves as saints:* but it is not unlawful for them to *carry themselves* as saints.

Answer. It is the duty of unconverted men both to *become* saints, and to behave as saints. The scripture rule is, *Make the tree good, that the fruit may be good.* Mr. Stoddard himself never supposed, that the fruit of *saints* was to be expected from men, or could possibly be brought forth by them in truth, till they *were* saints.

And I see not how it is true, that unconverted men ought, in *every* respect, to do those *external* things, which it is the duty of a godly man to do. It is the duty of a godly man, conscious of his having given his heart unto the Lord, to profess his love to God and his esteem of him above all, his unfeigned faith in Christ, &c. and in his closet devotions to thank God for these graces as the fruit of the Spirit in him. But it is not the duty of another that really has no faith, nor love to God, to do thus. Neither any more is it a natural man's duty to profess these things in the *Lord's supper.*—Mr. Stoddard taught it to be the duty of converts, on many occasions, to profess their faith and love and other graces *before men*, by relating their *experiences* in conversation: But it would be great wickedness,

for such as know themselves to be not *saints*, than to do; because they would speak falsely, and utter lies in so doing. Now, for the like reason, it would be very sinful, for men to profess and seal their *consent* to the covenant of grace in the *Lord's supper*, when they know at the same time that they do *not* consent to it, nor have their *hearts* at all in the affair.

OBJECT. XV.

This scheme will *keep out* of the church some *true saints;* for there are some such who determine against themselves, and their prevailing judgment is, that they are *not* saints: and we had better let in several hypocrites, than exclude one true child of God.

ANSWER. I think, it is much better to insist on some *visibility* to reason, of *true saintship*, in admitting members, even although this, through men's infirmity and darkness, and Satan's temptations, be an occasion of some true saints abstaining; than by express liberty given, to open the door to as many as please, of those who have *no visibility* of real saintship, and make no profession of it, nor pretension to it; and that because this method tends to the ruin and great reproach of the Christian church, and also to the ruin of the persons admitted.

1. It tends to the *reproach* and *ruin* of the Christian *church*. For *by the rule which God hath given for admissions, if it be carefully attended* (it is said) MORE *unconverted, than converted persons, will be admitted.* It is then *confessedly* the way to have the greater part of the members of the Christian church *ungodly* men; yea, so much greater, that the godly shall be but *few* in comparison of the ungodly; agreeable to their interpretation of that saying of Christ, *many are called, but few are chosen.* Now, if this be an exact state of the case, it will demonstrably follow, on scripture principles, that opening the door so wide has a direct tendency to bring into Christian churches such as are without even *moral sincerity*, and do not make religion at all their business, neglecting and casting off secret prayer and other duties, and living a life of carnality and vanity, so far as they can, consistently with avoiding *church-censures;* which possibly may be sometimes to a great degree. Ungodly men may be morally sober, serious, and conscientious, and may have what is called *moral sincerity*, for awhile; and even may have these things in a considerable measure, when they first come into the church: but if their hearts are not changed, there is no probability at all of these things continuing long. The scrip-

ture has told us, that this *their goodness* is apt to vanish *like the morning cloud and early dew*. How can it be expected but that their religion should in a little time *wither away*, when it has *no root?* How can it be expected, that the *lamp* should burn long, without *oil in the vessel* to feed it? If *lust* be unmortified, and left in reigning power in the heart, it will sooner or later prevail; and at length sweep away *common grace* and *moral sincerity*, however excited and maintained for awhile by conviction and temporary affections. It will happen to them according to the *true proverb*, *The dog is returned to his vomit, and the swine that was washed to his wallowing in the mire.* It is said of the hypocrite, *Will he delight himself in the Almighty? Will he always call upon God?*—And thus our churches will be likely to be such congregations as the Psalmist said he *hated*, and *would not sit with*. Psal. xxvi. 4, 5. "I have not sat with vain persons, nor will I go in with dissemblers; I have hated the congregation of evil-doers, nor will I sit with the wicked."—This will be the way to have the Lord's table ordinarily furnished with such guests as allow themselves to live in known sin, meeting together only to crucify Christ afresh, instead of commemorating his crucifixion with the repentance, faith, gratitude, and love of friends. And this is the way to have the governing part of the church such as are not even conscientious men, and are careless about the honour and interest of religion. And the direct tendency of that is, in process of time, to introduce a prevailing negligence in discipline, and carelessness in seeking ministers of a pious and worthy character. And the next step will be, the church being filled with persons openly vicious in manners, or else scandalously erroneous in opinions. It is well if this be not already the case in fact with some churches that have long professed and practised on the principles I oppose. And if these principles should be professed and proceeded on by Christian churches every where, the natural tendency of it would be, to have the greater part of what is called the church of Christ, through the world, made up of vicious and erroneous persons. And how greatly would this be to the reproach of the Christian church, and of the holy name and religion of Jesus Christ in the sight of all nations?*

* And this by the way answers another *objection*, which some have made, viz. That the way I plead for, tends to keep the church of Christ *small*, and hinder the growth of it. Whereas, I think, the contrary tends to keep it small, as it is the wickedness of its members, that above all things in the world prejudices mankind against it; and is the chief stumbling-block, that hinders the propagation of Christianity, and so the growth of the Christian church. But holiness would cause the light of the church to shine so as to induce others to resort to it.

And now is it not better, to have a few real living Christians kept back through darkness and scruples, than to open a door for letting in such universal ruin as this? To illustrate it by a familiar comparison; is it not better, when England is at war with France, to keep out of the British realm a few loyal Englishmen, than to give leave for as many treacherous Frenchmen to come in as please?

2. This way tends to the eternal ruin of the *parties admitted;* for it lets in such, yea, it persuades such to come in, as *know themselves to be impenitent and unbelieving*, in a dreadful manner to *take God's name in vain; in vain to worship him*, and abuse sacred things, by performing those external acts and rites in the name of God, which are instituted for declarative signs and professions of repentance toward God, faith in Christ, and love to him, at the same time that *they know* themselves destitute of those things which they profess to have. And is it not better, that some *true saints*, through their own weakness and misunderstanding, should be kept away from the Lord's table, which will not keep such out of heaven, than voluntarily to bring in multitudes of *false professors* to partake unworthily, and in effect to seal their own condemnation.

OBJECT. XVI.

You *cannot keep out hypocrites*, when all is said and done; but *as many* graceless persons will be likely to get into the church in the way of a *profession of godliness*, as if nothing were insisted on, but a freedom from public *scandal.*

Answer. It may possibly be so in some places through the misconduct of ministers and people, by remissness in their inquiries, carelessness as to the proper matter of a profession, or setting up some mistaken rules of judgment; neglecting those things which the scripture insists upon as the most essential articles in the character of a *real saint;* and substituting others in the room of them; such as impressions on the imagination, instead of renewing influences on the heart; pangs of affection, instead of the habitual temper of the mind; a certain method and order of impressions and suggestions, instead of the nature of things experienced, &c. But to say, that in churches where the nature, the notes, and evidences of *true Christianity* as described in the scriptures, are well understood, taught, and observed, *there* as many *hypocrites* are likely to get in; or to suppose, that *there* as many persons of an honest character, who are well instructed in these rules, and well conducted by them—and judging of themselves by these rules, do think themselves

true saints, and accordingly make profession of godliness, and are admitted as saints in a judgment of rational charity—are likely to be carnal, unconverted men, as of those who make no such pretence and have no such hope, nor exhibit any such evidences to the eye of a judicious charity,—is not so much an objection against the doctrine I am defending, as a reflection upon the scripture itself, with regard to the rules it gives, either for persons to judge of their own state, or for others to form a charitable judgment, as if they were of little or no service. We are in miserable circumstances indeed, if the rules of God's holy word in things of such infinite importance, are so ambiguous and uncertain, like the Heathen oracles. And it would be very strange, if in these days of the gospel, when God's mind is revealed with such great plainness of speech, and the canon of scripture is completed, it should ordinarily be the case in fact, that those who, having a right doctrinal understanding of the scripture, and judging themselves by its rules, do probably conclude or seriously hope of themselves, that they are real saints, are *as many* of them in a state of sin and condemnation, as others who have no such rational hope concerning their good estate, nor pretend to any special experiences in religion.

OBJECT. XVII.

If a *profession of godliness* be a thing required in order to admission into the church, there being some *true saints* who *doubt* of their state, and from a *tender conscience* will not dare to make such a profession; and there being *others*, that have no grace, nor much tenderness of conscience, but great *presumption* and *forwardness*, who will boldly make the highest profession of religion, and so will get admittance: It will hence come to pass, that the very thing, which will in effect procure for the *latter* an admission, rather than the former, will be their *presumption* and *wickedness*.

Answer 1. It is no sufficient objection against the *wholesomeness* of a rule established for regulating the *civil* state of mankind, that in *some* instances men's *wickedness* may take *advantage* by that *rule*, so that even their *wickedness* shall be the very thing, which, by an abuse of that rule, procures them temporal *honours* and *privileges*. For such is the present state of man in this evil world, that good rules, in many instances, are liable to be thus abused and perverted. As for instance, there are many human laws, accounted wholesome and necessary, by

which an accused or suspected person's own solemn profession of *innocency*, upon *oath*, shall be the condition of acquittance and impunity; and the want of such a protestation or profession shall expose him to the punishment. And yet, by an abuse of these rules, in some instances, nothing but the horrid sin of *perjury*, or that most presumptuous wickedness of false swearing, shall be the very thing that acquits a man: While another of a more tender conscience, who *fears an oath*, must suffer the penalty of the law.

2. Those rules, by all wise law-givers, are accounted wholesome, which prove of *general* good tendency, notwithstanding any bad consequences arising in some particular instances. And as to the ecclesiastical rule now in question, of admission to sacraments on a *profession* of *godliness*, when attended with requisite circumstances; although in particular instances it may be an occasion of some *tender-hearted* Christians *abstaining*, and some *presumptuous* sinners being *admitted*, yet that does not hinder but that a proper *visibility* of holiness to the eye of reason, or a *probability* of it in a judgment of rational Christian charity, may this way be maintained, as the proper qualification of candidates for admission. Nor does it hinder but that it may be reasonable and wholesome for mankind, in their outward conduct, to regulate themselves by such probability; and that this should be a reasonable and good rule for the church to regulate themselves by in their admissions; notwithstanding it may happen in particular instances, that things are *really* diverse from, yea the very reverse of, what they are *visibly*. Such a *profession* as has been insisted on, when attended with *requisite circumstances*, carries in it a rational credibility in the judgment of Christian charity: For it ought to be attended with an honest and sober character, and with evidences of good doctrinal knowledge, and with all proper, careful, and diligent instructions of a prudent pastor. And though the pastor is not to act as a *searcher of the heart*, or a *lord of conscience* in this affair, yet that hinders not but that he may and ought to inquire particularly into the experiences of the souls committed to his care and charge, that he may be under the best advantages to instruct and advise them, to apply the teachings and rules of God's word unto them, for their self-examination, to be *helpers of their joy*, and promoters of their salvation. However, finally, not any pretended extraordinary skill of *his* in discerning the heart, but the person's *own* serious profession concerning what he finds in his own soul, after he has been well instructed, must regulate the public conduct with respect to him, where there is no other external visible thing to contradict and over-rule it. And a serious profession of godliness, under these circumstances, carries in it a visibility to the eye of the church's rational and Christian judgment.

3. If it be still insisted on, that a *rule* of admission into the church cannot be *good*, if liable to such *abuse* as that forementioned, I must observe, This will overthrow the rules that the *objectors* themselves go by in their admissions. For they insist upon it, that a man must not only have knowledge and be free of scandal, but must appear *orthodox*, and profess the common faith. Now *presumptuous lying*, for the sake of the honour of being in the church, having children baptized, and voting in ecclesiastical affairs, may possibly be the very thing that brings some men into the church by this rule; while greater *tenderness of conscience* may be the very thing that keeps others out. For instance, a man who secretly in his mind gives no credit to the commonly received doctrine of the *Trinity*, yet may, by pretending an assent to it, and in hypocrisy making a public profession of it, get into the church; when at the same time another that equally disbelieves it, but has a more tender conscience than to allow himself in solemnly telling a lie, may by that very means be kept off from the communion.

OBJECT. XVIII.

It seems hardly reasonable to suppose, that the only wise God has made men's *opinion of themselves*, and a *profession* of it, the term of their admission to church-privileges; when we know, that very often the *worst* men have the *highest* opinion of themselves.

Answ. 1. It must be granted me, that in fact this is the case, if any proper *profession* at all is expected and required, whether it be of *sanctifying grace*, or of *moral sincerity*, or any thing else that is *good*: And to be sure, nothing is *required* to be professed, or is *worthy* to be professed, any further than it is *good*.

Answ. 2. If *some* things, by the confession of all, must be *professed*, *because* they are *good*, and of great importance; then certainly it must be very unreasonable, to say, that those things wherein true *holiness* consists are *not* to be professed, or that a profession of them should *not* be required, because they are *good*, even in the highest degree, and infinitely the most important and most necessary things of any in the world. And it is unreasonable to say, that it is the less to be expected we should profess sincere friendship to Christ, *because* friendship to Christ is the most *excellent* qualification of any whatsoever, and the contrary the most odious. How absurd is it to say this, merely

under a notion that for a man to *profess* what is so good and so reasonable, is to profess a *high opinion of himself!*

Answ. 3. Though some of the *worst* men are apt to entertain the *highest opinion of themselves*, yet their self-conceit is no *rule* to the church: But the apparent *credibility* of men's *profession* is to be the ground of ecclesiastical proceedings.

OBJECT. XIX.

If it be necessary that *adult* persons should make a profession of godliness, in order to their own admission to *baptism*, then undoubtedly it is necessary in order to their *children* being baptized on their account. For parents cannot convey to their children a right of this sacrament by virtue of any qualifications *lower* than those requisite in order to their own right: Children being admitted to baptism only as being, as it were, parts and members of their parents. And besides, the act of parents in offering up their *children* in a sacrament, which is a seal of the *covenant of grace*, is in them a solemn attending that sacrament *as* persons *interested* in the covenant, and a public manifestation of their approving and consenting to it, as truly as if they then offered up *themselves* to God in that ordinance. Indeed it implies a renewed offering up themselves with their children, and devoting both jointly to God in covenant; *themselves*, with their children, as *parts of themselves.* But now what fearful work will such doctrine make amongst us! We shall have multitudes *unbaptized*, who will be without the external badge of Christianity, and so in that respect will be like Heathens. And this is the way to have the land full of persons who are destitute of that which is spoken of in scripture as ordinarily requisite to men's *salvation;* and it will bring a *reproach* on vast multitudes, with the families they belong to. And not only so, but it will tend to make them profane and heathenish; for by thus treating our children, as though *they had no part in the Lord*, we shall *cause them to cease from fearing the Lord;* Josh. xxii. 24, 25.

Answer 1. As to children being *destitute* of that which is spoken of in scripture as one thing ordinarly *requisite to salvation;* I would observe, that *baptism* can do their souls no good any otherwise than through God's *blessing* attending it; But we have no reason to expect his blessing with baptism, if administered to those that it does *not* belong to by *his institution.*

Answer 2. As to the *reproach*, which will be brought on parents and children, by children going without baptism, through the parents neglecting a profession of godliness, and so visibly remaining among the unconverted; if any insist on this objection, I think it will savour much *unreasonableness* and even *stupidity*.

It will savour of an *unreasonable* spirit. It is not enough if God freely offers men to own their children and to give them the honour of baptism, in case the parents will turn from sin and relinquish their enmity against him, heartily give up themselves and their children to him, and take upon them the profession of godliness?—If men are truly *excusable*, in not turning to God through Christ, in not believing with the heart, and in not confessing with the mouth, why do not we openly plead that they are so? And why do not we teach sinners, that they are *not to blame* for continuing among the enemies of Christ, and neglecting and despising his great salvation? If they are not at all excusable in this, and it be wholly owing to their own indulged lusts, that they refuse sincerely to give up themselves and their children to God, then how unreasonable is it for them to complain that their children are denied the honour of having God's mark set upon them as some of his? If parents are angry at this, such a temper shews them to be insensible of their own vile treatment of the blessed God. Suppose a prince send to a traitor in prison, and upon opening the prison doors make him the offer, that if he would come forth and submit himself to him, he should not only be pardoned himself, but both he and his children should have such and such badges of honour conferred upon them; and yet the rebel's enmity and stoutness of spirit against his prince is such, that he cannot find in his heart to comply with the gracious offer; will he have any cause to be angry, that his children have not those badges of honour given them? Besides, it is very much owing to *parents*, that there are so many *young* people who can make no profession of godliness. They have themselves therefore to blame, if proceeding on the principles which have been maintained, there is like to rise a generation of unbaptized persons. If ancestors had thoroughly done their duty to their posterity in instructing, praying for, and governing their children, and setting them good examples, there is reason to think, the case would have been far otherwise.

Insisting on this objection would savour of much *stupidity*. For the objection seems to suppose the country to be full of those that are *unconverted*, and so exposed every moment to eternal damnation; yet it seems we do not hear such great and general complaints and lamentable outcries concerning this. Nor why is it looked upon so dreadful, to have great numbers

going without the *name* and honourable *badge* of Christianity, when at the same time it is no more resented and laid to heart, that such multitudes go without the *thing*, which is infinitely more dreadful? Why are we so silent about this? What is the *name* good for, without the *thing?* Can parents bear to have their children go about the world in the most odious and dangerous state of soul, in reality the children of the devil, and condemned to eternal burnings; when at the same time they cannot bear to have them disgraced by going without the honour of being *baptized!* A high honour and privilege this is; yet how can parents be contented with the *sign*, exclusive of the *thing* signified! Why should they covet the external honour for their children, while they are so careless about the spiritual blessing! Does not this argue a senselessness of their own misery, as well as of their children's, in being in a *Christless* state? If a man and his child were both together bitten by a viper, dreadfully swollen, and like to die, would it not argue *stupidity* in the parent, to be anxiously concerned only about his child's having on a dirty garment in such circumstances, and angry at others for not putting some outward ornament upon it? But the difference in this present case is infinitely greater, and more important. Let parents pity their poor children because they are without baptism; and pity themselves who are in danger of everlasting misery, while they have no interest in the covenant of grace, and so have no right to covenant favours and honours, for themselves nor children. No religious honours, to be obtained in any other way than by real religion, are much worth contending for. And in truth, it is no honour at all to a man, to have merely the outward *badges* of a Christian, without *being* a Christian indeed; any more than it would be an honour to a man that has no learning, but is a mere dunce, to have a degree at college; or than it is for a man who has no valour, but is a grand coward, to have an honourable commission in an army; which only serves, by lifting him up, to expose him to deeper reproach, and sets him forth as the more notable object of contempt.

Answer 3. Concerning the *tendency* of this way of confining baptism to professors of godliness and their children, to promote *irreligion* and *profaneness;* I would observe, *first*, That *Christ* is best able to *judge* of the tendency of his own *institutions*. *Secondly*, I am bold to say, that supposing this principle and practice to have such a tendency, is a great *mistake*, contrary to scripture and plain reason and experience. Indeed such a tendency it would have, to shut men out from *having any part in the Lord*, (in the sense of the two tribes and half,

Josh. xxii. 25.) or to fence them out by such a partition-wall as formerly was between Jews and Gentiles; and so to shut them out as to tell them, if they were never so much disposed to serve God, he was not ready to accept them; according to the notion the Jews seem to have had of the uncircumcised Gentiles.—But to forbear giving men honours to which they have no title, and not to compliment them with the name and badge of God's people and children, while they pretend to nothing but what is consistent with their being his enemies, that has no such tendency. But the contrary has very much this tendency. For is it not found by constant experience through all ages, that blind, corrupt mankind, in matters of religion, are strongly disposed to rest in a *name*, instead of the *thing;* in the shadow, instead of the substance; and to make themselves easy with the former, in the neglect of the latter? This over-valuing of common grace, and *moral sincerity*, as it is called; this building so much upon them, making them the conditions of enjoying the seals of God's covenant, and the appointed privileges, and honourable and sacred badges of God's children; this, I cannot but think, naturally tends to sooth and flatter the pride of vain man, while it tends to aggrandize those things in men's eyes, which they of themselves, are strongly disposed to magnify and trust in, without such encouragements to prompt them to it, yea, against all discouragements and dissuasives that can possibly be used with them.

This way of proceeding greatly tends to establish the negligence of *parents*, and to confirm the stupidity and security of wicked *children*.—If *baptism* were *denied* to all children, whose parents did not *profess godliness*, and in a judgment of rational charity appear *real saints*, it would tend to excite pious heads of families to more thorough care and pains in the religious education of their children, and to more fervent prayer for them, that they might be converted in *youth*, before they entered into a married state; and so if they have children, the entail of the covenant be secured.—And it would tend to awaken *young* people themselves, as yet unconverted, especially when about to settle in the world. Their having no right to Christian privileges for their children, in case they should become parents, would tend to lead them at such a time seriously to reflect on their own awful state; which, if they do not get out of it, must lay a foundation for so much calamity and reproach to their families. And if after their becoming *parents*, they still remain unconverted, the melancholy thought of their children going without so much as the external mark of Christians, would have a continual tendency to affect them with their own sin and folly in neglecting to turn to God, by which they bring such visible calamity

and disgrace on themselves and families. They would have this additional motive continually to stir them up to seek grace for themselves and their children. Whereas, the contrary practice has a natural tendency to quiet the minds of persons, both in their own and their children's unregeneracy. Yea, may it not be suspected, that the way of baptizing the children of such as never make any proper profession of godliness, is an expedient originally invented for that very end, to give ease to ancestors with respect to their posterity, in times of general declension and degeneracy?

This way of proceeding greatly tends to establish the stupidity and irreligion of *children*, as well as the negligence of parents. It is certain, that unconverted parents do never truly give up their children to God; since they do not truly give up themselves to him. And if neither of the parents appear truly pious, in the judgment of rational charity, there is not in this case any ground to expect that the children will be *brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*, or that they will have any thing worthy the name of a Christian education, how solemnly soever the parents may promise it. The faithfulness of Abraham was such as might be trusted in this matter. See Gen. xviii. 19. But men that are not so much as visibly godly, upon what grounds are they to be trusted? How can it be reasonably expected, that they should faithfully bring up their children for GOD, who were never sincerely willing that their children or themselves should be his? And it will be but presumption, to expect that those children who are never given up to God, nor brought up for him, should prove religious, and be God's children. There is no manner of reason to expect any other than that such children ordinarily will grow up in irreligion, whether they are baptized or not. And for persons to go about with the name and visible seal of God, and the sacred badge of Christianity upon them, having had their bodies, by a holy ordinance, consecrated to God as his temples, yet living in irreligion and ways of wickedness; this serves to tend exceedingly to harden them, and establish in them an habitual contempt of sacred things. Such persons, above all men, are like to be the most hardened and abandoned, and reclaimed with most difficulty: As it was with the wicked Jews, who were much more confirmed in their wickedness, than those Heathen cities of Tyre and Sidon. To give that which is holy to those who are profane, or whom we have no reason, from the circumstances of parentage and education, to expect will be otherwise, is not the way to make them better, but worse. It is the way to have them habitually *trample* holy things *under their feet*, and increase in contempt of them, yea, even to *turn again and rent us*, and be more mischievous and hurtful enemies of that which is good, than otherwise they would be.

OBJECT. XX.

Some *ministers* have been greatly *blessed* in the other way of proceeding, and some men have been *converted at the Lord's supper.*

Answer. Though we are to eye the providence of God, and not disregard his *works*, yet to interpret them to a sense, or apply them to an use inconsistent with the scope of the *word* of God, is a misconstruction and misapplication of them. God has not given us his *providence* but his *word* to be our governing *rule.* God is sovereign in his dispensations of providence; he bestowed the blessing on Jacob, even when he had a lie in his mouth. He was pleased to meet with Solomon, and make known himself to him, and bless him in an extraordinary manner, while he was worshipping in an *high place.* He met with Saul, when in a course of violent opposition to him, and out of the way of his duty in the highest degree, going to Damascus to persecute Christ; and even then bestowed the greatest blessing upon him, that perhaps ever was bestowed on a mere man. The conduct of divine providence, with its reasons, is too little understood by us, to be improved as our rule. "God has his way in the sea, his path in the mighty waters, and his footsteps are not known: And he gives none account of any of his matters." But God has given us his *word*, to this very end, that it might be our *rule;* and therefore has so ordered it that it may be understood by us. And strictly speaking, this is our *only* rule. If we join any thing else to it, as making it our *rule*, we do that which we have no warrant for, yea, that which God himself has forbidden. See Deut. iv. 2. Prov. xxx. 6. And with regard to God's blessing and succeeding ministers, have not some had remarkable experience of it in the way which I plead for, as well as some who have been for the way I oppose? However, we cannot conclude, that God sees nothing at all *amiss* in ministers, because he *blesses* them. In general, he may see those things in them which are very right and excellent; these he approves and regards, while he overlooks and pardons their mistakes in opinion or practice, and, notwithstanding these, is pleased to crown their labours with his blessing.

As to the two last arguments in the *Appeal to the Learned*, concerning the subjects of the Christian sacraments, their being members of the *visible church*, and not the *invisible;* the force of those arguments depends entirely on the resolution of this question, Who are *visible saints?* or, what adult persons are regularly admitted to the privileges of members of the *visible*

church? Which question has already been largely considered: And, I think, it has been demonstrated that they are those who exhibit a credible profession and visibility of *gospel holiness* or vital piety, and not merely of *moral sincerity.* So that there is no need of further debating the point in this place.

I might here mention many things not yet noticed, which some object as *inconveniences* attending the scheme I have maintained. If men should set up their own wit and wisdom in opposition to God's revealed will, there is no end of objections of this kind, which might be raised against any of God's institutions. Some have found great fault even with the *creation* of the world, as being very inconveniently done, and have imagined that they could tell how it might be mended in a great many respects. But however God's altar may appear homely to us, yet if we lift up our hand to mend it, we shall pollute it. Laws and institutions are given for the *general good*, and not to avoid every particular inconvenience. And however it may so happen, that sometimes inconveniences (real or imaginary) may attend the scheme I have maintained; yet, I think, they are in no measure equal to the manifest conveniences and happy tendencies of it, or to the palpable inconveniences and pernicious consequences of the other.—I have already mentioned some things of this aspect, and would here briefly observe some others.

Thus, the way of making such a difference between outward duties of *morality* and *worship*, and those great inward duties of our *love of God*, and *acceptance of Christ*, that the former must be *visible*, but that there need be *no exhibition* nor *pretence* of the latter, in order to persons being admitted into the visible family of God; and that under a notion of the latter being *impossibilities*, but the other being *within men's power;* this, I think, has a direct tendency to confirm in men an *insensibility* of the heinousness of unbelief and enmity against God our Saviour, which are the source and sum of all wickedness. It tends to prevent their coming under an humbling *conviction* of the greatness and utter inexcusableness of these sins, which men must be brought to if ever they obtain salvation. Indeed it is a way that not only has this tendency, but has actually and apparently this effect, and that to a great degree.

The effect of this method of proceeding in the churches in New England, which have fallen into it, is actually this.—There are some that are received into these churches under the notion of their being in the judgment of rational charity *visible saints* or *professing saints*, who yet at the same time are actually open *professors* of heinous *wickedness:* I mean, the wickedness of living in known impenitence and unbelief, the wickedness of

living in enmity against God, and in the rejection of Christ under the gospel. Or, which is the same thing, they are such as freely and frequently acknowledge, that they do not profess to be as yet *born again*, but look on themselves as really *unconverted*, as having never unfeignedly accepted of Christ; and they do either explicitly or implicitly number themselves among those that *love not the Lord Jesus Christ;* of whom the apostle says, let such be Anathema Maranatha! And accordingly it is known, all over the town where they live, that they make no pretensions to any *sanctifying grace* already obtained; nor of consequence are they commonly looked upon as any other than *unconverted* persons. Now, can this be judged the comely *order* of the gospel! or shall God be supposed the *author* of such *confusion!*

In this way of church-proceeding, God's own children and the true disciples of Christ are obliged to receive those as their *brethren*, admit them to the *communion of saints*, and embrace them in the highest acts of Christian society, even in their great *feast of love*, where they feed together on the body and blood of Christ, whom yet they have no reason to look upon otherwise than as *enemies of the cross of Christ*, and haters of their heavenly Father and dear Redeemer. For they make no pretension to any thing at all inconsistent with those characters; yea, in many places, as I said before, freely professing this to be actually the case with them.

Christ often forbids the members of his church to *judge one another*. But in this way of ecclesiastical proceeding, it is done continually, and looked upon as no hurt; a great part of those admitted into the church are by others of the same communion judged *unconverted*, *graceless* persons; and it is impossible to avoid it, while we stretch not beyond the bounds of a *rational* charity.

This method of proceeding must inevitably have one of these two consequences: Either there must be *no public notice* at all given of it, when so signal a work of grace is wrought, as a sinner being brought to repent and turn to God, and hopefully become the subject of saving conversion; or else this notice must be given in the way of *conversation*, by the *persons themselves*, frequently, freely, and in all companies, declaring their own experiences. But surely, either of these consequences must be very unhappy.—The former is so, *viz.* forbidding and preventing any *public* notice being given on earth of the *repentance of a sinner*, an event so much to the honour of God, and so much taken notice of in *heaven*, causing *joy in the presence of the angels of God*, and tending so much to the advancement of religion in the world. For it is found by experience, that scarce any one thing has so great an influence to

awaken sinners, and engage them to seek salvation, and to quicken and animate saints, as the tidings of a sinner's repentance, or hopeful conversion. God evidently makes use of it as an eminent means of advancing religion in a time of remarkable revival. And to take a course effectually to prevent its being notified on earth, appears to me a counteracting of God, in that which he ever makes use of as a chief means of the propagation of true piety, and which we have reason to think he will make use of as one principal means of the conversion of the world in the glorious latter day.—But now as to the *other* way—the way of giving notice to the public of this event, by particular persons *themselves* publishing their own experiences, from time to time and from place to place, on all occasions and before all companies—I must confess, it is a practice that appears to me attended with many inconveniences, yea, big with mischiefs. The abundant trial of this method lately made, and the large experience we have had of the evil consequences of it, is enough to put all sober and judicious people for ever out of conceit with it. I shall not pretend to enumerate all the mischiefs attending it, which would be very tedious; but shall now only mention two things. One is, the bad effect it has upon the persons themselves that practice it, in the great tendency it has to spiritual *pride;* insensibly begetting and establishing an evil habit of mind in that respect, by the frequent return of the temptation, and this many times when they are not guarded against it, and have no time, by consideration and prayer, to fortify their minds. And then it has a very bad effect on the minds of *others* that hear their communication, and so on the state of religion in general, in this way. It being thus the custom for persons of all sorts, young and old, wise and unwise, superiors and inferiors, freely to tell their own experiences before all companies, it is commonly done very *injudiciously*, often very rashly and foolishly, out of season, and in circumstances tending to defeat any good end. Even sincere Christians too frequently in their conversation insist mainly on those things that are no part of their *true spiritual experience;* such as impressions on their imaginations, suggestions of facts by passages of scripture, &c.; in which case *children* and weak persons that hear, are apt to form their notions of religion and true piety by such experimental communications, and much more than they do by the most solid and judicious instructions they hear from the pulpit. This is found to be one of the devices whereby Satan has an inexpressible advantage to ruin the souls of men, and utterly to confound the interest of religion.—This matter of making a public profession of godliness or piety of heart, is certainly a very important affair, and ought to be under some *public regulation*, and under the direction of *skilful guides*, and not left

to the management of every man, woman, and child, according to their humour or fancy. And when it is done, it should be done with great seriousness, preparation, and prayer, as a solemn act of public respect and honour to God, in his house and in the presence of his people. Not that I condemn, but greatly approve of persons speaking sometimes of their religious experiences in private conversation, to proper persons and on proper occasions, with modesty and discretion, when the glory of God and the benefits or just satisfaction of others require it of them.

In a word, the practice of promiscuous admission—or that way of taking all into the *church* indifferently, *as visible saints*, who are not either ignorant or scandalous—and at the same time that custom taking place of persons publishing their own *conversion* in common *conversation*; where these two things meet together, they unavoidably make *two* distinct kinds of *visible churches*, or different bodies of professing saints, one within another, openly distinguished one from another, as it were by a visible dividing line. One company consisting of those who are *visibly gracious* Christians, and open *professors of godliness*; another consisting of those who are *visibly moral* livers, and only profess common virtues, without pretending to any special and spiritual experiences in their hearts, and who therefore are not reputed to be converts. I may appeal to those acquainted with the state of the churches, whether this be not actually the case in some, where this method of proceeding has been long established. But I leave the judicious reader to make his own remarks on this case, and to determine, whether there be a just foundation in scripture or reason for any such state of things; which to me, I confess, carries the face of glaring absurdity.

And now I commit this whole discourse (under God's blessing) to the reader's candid reflection and impartial judgment. I am sensible, it will be very difficult for many to be truly impartial in this affair; their prejudices being very great against the doctrine which I have maintained. And, I believe, I myself am the person, who, above all other upon the face of the earth, have had most in my circumstances to prejudice me against this doctrine, and to make me unwilling to receive conviction of its truth. However, the clear evidence of God's mind in his word, as things appear to me, has constrained me to think and act as I have now done. I dare not go contrary to such texts as these, Lev. x. 10. Jer. xv. 19. Ezek. xxii. 26. and xliv. 6—8. And having been fully persuaded in my own mind, as to what is the scripture rule in this matter, after a most careful, painful, and long search, I am willing, in the faithful prosecution of what appears to me of such importance,

and so plainly the mind and will of God, to resign to his providence, and leave the event in his hand.

It may not be improper to add here, as I have often had suggested to me, the probability of my being answered from the press: If any one shall see cause to undertake this, I have these reasonable requests to make of him, viz. That he would avoid the ungenerous and unmanly artifices used by too many polemic writers, while they *turn aside to vain jangling*, in *carping* at incidental passages, and displaying their wit upon some minute particulars, or less material things, in the author they oppose, with much *exclamation*, if possible to excite the ignorant and unwary reader's disrelish of the author, and to make him appear contemptible, and so to get the victory that way; perhaps dwelling upon, and glorying in some pretended *inconsistencies* in some parts of the discourse, without ever entering throroughly into the *merits of the cause*, or closely encountering any of the main arguments. If any one opposes me from the press, I desire he would attend to the true state of the question, and endeavour fairly to take off the force of each argument, by answering the same directly, and distinctly, with calm and close reasoning; avoiding (as much as may be) both dogmatical assertion and passionate reflection. Sure I am, I shall not envy him the applause of a victory over me, however signal and complete, if only gained by superior light and convincing evidence.—I would also request him to set his *name* to his performance, that I may in that respect stand on even ground with him before the world, in a debate wherein the public is to judge between us. This will be the more reasonable, in case he should mingle any thing of accusation with his arguing. It was *the manner* even of the Heathen Romans, and reputed by them but just and equal, *to have accusers face to face.*

May the GOD of all grace and peace unite us more in judgment, affection, and practice, that with *one heart* and *one mouth*, we may glorify his name through *Jesus Christ.* AMEN.

APPENDIX.

Being a LETTER *to the* AUTHOR, *in answer to his request of information concerning the opinion of Protestant Divines and Churches in general, of the Presbyterians in Scotland and Dissenters in England in particular, respecting* FIVE QUESTIONS *that relate to this controversy.*

REV. AND DEAR SIR,

If you look into Mr. BAXTER's controversial writings against Mr. BLAKE, you will meet with such accounts of principles and facts, as I think may reasonably give an inquirer much satisfaction as to the common judgment of Protestant churches and divines in the points you mention. I particularly refer you to his FIVE DISPUTATIONS *of Right to Sacraments, and the true Nature of Visible Christianity;* where all or the most of your *queries* are considered and answered, with a multitude of *testimonies* produced in favour of sentiments contrary to those of your excellent predecessor, the late *Mr. Stoddard.* I have not said this from any disposition to excuse myself from the labour of making some further inquiry, if it be thought needful. And as it may shew my willingness to gratify your desire, I will now say something on your *questions* distinctly, but with as much brevity as I can.

QUESTION I. *What is the general opinion respecting that* SELF-EXAMINATION *required in* 1 Cor. xi. 28. *Whether communicants are not here directed to examine themselves concerning the* truth of grace, *or their real godliness?*

ANSWER. This construction of the text, as far as I have had opportunity to inquire, appears to me very generally received; if I may judge by what many celebrated *expositors* have said, on the place, and by what many famous divines have written in treatises of *preparations* for the Lord's supper, besides what is contained in public *confessions, catechisms, directories,* &c. I think Dr. Reynolds, in his *Meditations on*

the Lord's supper, has summarily expressed the common judgment of Calvinists in these strong lines of his: "The *sacrament* is but a *seal* of the *covenant;* and the covenant essentially includes *conditions;* and the condition on our part is *faith.* No faith, no *covenant;* no covenant, no *seal;* no seal, no *sacrament.*—The *matter* then of this *trial* (says he) must be that *vital qualification*, which predisposeth a man for receiving of these holy mysteries; and that is *faith.*"

However, I may venture to be confident, that Mr. Stoddard's gloss on the text, who tells us in his controverted *sermon*, "The meaning is, that a man must *come solemnly* to that ordinance, *examining what* NEED *he has of it*," is quite foreign from the current sense of Calvinist writers. And, though he makes a different comment in his *Appeal to the Learned*, saying, "The *examination* called for is, whether they *understood the nature* of the ordinance, that so they may *solemnly consider what they have to do* when they wait upon God in it;" neither can I find any appearance of a general consent of the learned and orthodox to this *new gloss*, at least as exhibiting the full meaning of the text. I might easily confront it with numerous authorities: but the *Palatine Catechism*, and that of the *Westminster Assembly*, with the common explanations and catechizings upon them, may be appealed to as *instar omnium.* And I shall only add here, if it be allowed a just expectation that the *candidate* for the communion *examine himself* about the *same* things, at least as the *pastor*, to whom he applies for admission, ought to make the subject of his examination, then it is worth while to hear the opinion of those unnamed *ministers in New England*, (among whom the late Dr. Colman, I have reason to think, was the principal,) that answered Dr. Mather's *Order of the Gospel*, (anno 1700,) who, in the *Postscript* to their *Review*, thus express themselves: "*We highly approve*—that the proponant of the Lord's table be *examined* of his baptismal vow; *his sense* of spiritual wants, sinfulness, and wretchedness; *his hope, faith, experiences*, resolutions through the grace of God." This, I think, is something beyond Mr. Stoddard.

QUESTION II. *Whether it be the general opinion of those aforesaid, that some who* know *themselves to be* unregenerate, *and under the reigning power of sin*, ought *notwithstanding, in such a state, to come to the Lord's table?*

ANSWER. I am aware, Sir, though you have seen fit to take no notice of it to me, that Mr. Stoddard (in his *Doctrine of Instituted Churches*) is peremptory in the *affirmative;* but I have met with no author among Calvinists, at home or abroad, consenting with him, unless it be Mr. Blake, and some that

were for a promiscuous admission, with little or no limitation. If divines in general, of the Calvinistic character, were for such a latitude as Mr. Stoddard's, what can we suppose to be the reason, that in treating on the *Lord's supper*, they so constantly consider it as one of the *rights of the church, belonging to the truly faithful alone, exclusively of all others?* Why do we hear them declaring, *It is certain that the right of external fellowship resides in the faithful only: and as to the rest, they are in that communion only by accident, and it is also only by accident that they are suffered there; but being what they are, they have not any part in the rights of that society properly belonging to them?* If they thought the sacrament instituted for *conversion*, why do we never find them recommending it as a *converting* ordinance, and urging persons to come to it with that view, who *know* themselves to be in an *unconverted state?* If they thought that any such have a *right before God*, and may come to it *with a good conscience*, why do we find them so solemnly *warning* all that are truly *convinced* of their remaining yet in a *natural* state, to *refrain* coming to the Lord's table in their unbelief and impenitence; as if they judged it a *sinful* and *dangerous* thing for them to come under such circumstances? I know Mr. Stoddard, in his *Appeal*, disputes the *fact*. But it has occurred to me in abundance of instances, while reviewing my authors on this occasion.

Among the foreign Protestants in Germany, France, &c. I shall name but two out of many instances before me. The *Heidelberg* or *Palatine Catechism*, which had the solemn approbation of the Synod of Dort, and was especially praised by the Divines of Great Britain; which has been in a manner universally received and taught, formerly in Scotland, and still all over Holland, and by reason of its excellency has been translated into no less than *thirteen* several languages; this is most express in claiming the *Lord's supper* for a special privilege of such as have *true faith* and *repentance;* and forbidding it to *hypocrites*, as well as scandalous persons, declaring that none such ought to come. See the *eighty-first* and other questions and answers, with Ursin's Latin *Explications*, and De Witte's English *Catechizings* thereon. Here, Sir, indeed you have the judgment of a multitude in one. Another celebrated book is Claude's *Historical Defence of the Reformation;* in which I meet with repeated declarations of the same sentiments, perfectly on the *negative* side of the question in hand, but, I think, too many and too long to be here transcribed.—The language of some of them I have just now had occasion to make use of.

As for the Church of Scotland, I find they have adopted

the Westminster Confession, Catechisms, and Directory, which debar all *ignorant* and *ungodly* persons from the Lord's table, and require every one to *examine* himself, not only as to his knowledge, but also his *faith*, *repentance*, *love*, *new obedience*, &c.—In their *Books of Discipline*, I observe sundry passages that appropriate the sacrament to the *truly penitent and faithful*, as the only proper subjects. Their *national covenant*, renewed from time to time, has this clause; To the which [true reformed kirk] we join ourselves willingly, in doctrine faith, religion, discipline, and use of the holy sacraments, *as lively members* of the same *in Christ* our Head, &c. And among the *divines* of Scotland, I find many in their sermons, sacramental speeches, and other discourses, declaring themselves strongly on the *negative* part in the question before us, advising to strictness in admission to the Lord's supper, renouncing the opinion of its being a *converting ordinance*, inviting only the sincere friends of Christ to it, and frequently *warning* professors conscious of reigning sin and hypocrisy to forbear approaching the Lord's table. I might bring much to this purpose from Mr. Andrew Gray's book of sermons, published anno 1716; and his sermons, printed anno 1746, with a preface by Mr. Willison.—So from Mr. Ebenezer Erskine's synodical sermon, anno 1732—And from Mr. Ralph Erskine's sermon on Isa. xlii. 6, and his discourse on fencing the tables, annexed to his sermon on John xvi. 15.—So from Mr. Willison's synodical sermon, anno 1733; where he sets down a variety of searching questions, (no less than twenty-seven,) which he advises to be put to proponants, and their answers to be waited for before they are admitted.—The anonymous author of *a Defence of National Churches against the Independents*, (who is reputed to be Mr. Willison,) asserts it as a Presbyterian principle, that none have *right before God* to the complete communion of the church, but such as have *grace;* and that none are to be admitted but those who are *saints*, at least in profession; such as profess to accept of the offers of Christ's grace, &c. and confess themselves to be *sincere*. Mr. Aytone, in his *Review* against Mr. Glas, owns that the Lord's supper is not a formal mean of *conversion*, but of further growth and nourishment to those *already* converted. In the same strain is Mr. Nasmith's *Treatise of the Entail of the Covenant*—And Mr. Warden's *Essay on Baptism*. In a word, I find Mr. Currie (in his synodical sermon, anno 1732,) testifying of the ministers in Scotland, that they are *tender*, (*i. e.* circumspect and cautious,) *in admitting people to the holy table of the Lord;* knowing the *design* of the ordinance is *not conversion*, but *confirmation;* and he observes, that all who approve themselves to God here, will a thousand times rather choose to have, was it but *one*

table or *half* a table of honest communicants, *true believers* and *real saints*, than have a *hundred* tables, by admitting any that are *unworthy*, (or *Christless* souls, as he anon characterizes them,)of whom there are not moral evidences of their *fitness* for this holy ordinance. And for the commendable practice of the Church of Scotland, in being *pointed* and *particular* in *debarring* the unworthy from this ordinance, (says he,) God forbid ever it turn into desuetude. I think I may here not unfitly subjoin those remarkable passages in Mr. Anderson's excellent *Defence of the Presbyterians*, against Mr. Rhind; where he informs us, *they look upon this holy ordinance as the common privilege of the faithful;* and therefore they usually fence the Lord's table, in the words of Scripture, 1 Cor. vi. 9. or some such-like. To exclude the *impenitent* from the *privilege* of gospel-mysteries; to debar those from the *Lord's table*, whom the Lord has, by the express sentence of his word, debarred out of the *kingdom of heaven*, is what every one, who is not quite lost in impiety, must own to be not only *lawful*, but a *duty*. Upon which I beg leave to observe, according to this principle I do not see but that a man who with apparent signs of credibility *confesses* himself habitually impenitent, ought to be debarred from the Lord's table: and surely, by parity of reason, he that *knows* himself to be unregenerate, ought to *refrain* coming, since there can be no true repentance without regeneration. I think we have no just grounds to suppose Mr. Stoddard's principle in this matter has hitherto any general prevalence in the Church of Scotland.

And now to pass over to England, neither do I find reason to think the *Dissenters* there in general are for Mr. STODDARD'S latitude. The *Assembly of Divines* pronounce all the *ungodly*, as well as ignorant, *unworthy* of the Lord's table; direct to *preparation* for it, by examining ourselves of our *being in Christ*, &c. And though they declare this sacrament appointed for the relief even of the *weak* and *doubting* Christian, who *unfeignedly* desires to be *found in Christ;* and having directed *such* a one to bewail his unbelief, and labour to have his doubts resolved, they assert that *so doing* he may and ought to come to the Lord's supper, to be *further strengthened:* yet I do not find any appearance of a hint, as if others who *know* themselves to be in a natural state, or are conscious of their being certainly graceless, may and ought to come to this ordinance, that they may be *converted*. Nay, they expressly declare of ALL *ungodly* persons, that while they remain such, they *cannot* without great sin against Christ partake of those holy mysteries.—As to particular divines, I find multitudes of them among the Dissenters, in later as well as former times, expressing the same sentiments: distinguishing between natural and instituted duties, between initial and con-

firming means, between special ordinances and common: and declaring the Lord's supper a *disciple-privilege*, peculiar to such as have *disciple-properties*, and admonishing as well the *close hypocrite*, as the more gross, of the *sin and danger* of coming to it in his unregenerate state, impenitent and unbelieving. Thus Mr. Bolton, in his discourse on *the Wedding Supper and the Wedding Garment*, warns the *graceless* not to come to the Lord's supper; affirming, that an *unsanctified presence* will be found as bad as a *profane absence*.—Mr. Baxter, in his *Five Disputations*, has much that runs in the same strain; so in his *Reformed Liturgy*, and in his *Christian Concord*, where we have his brethren joining their testimony with his. Likewise Mr. Charnock, in his discourse of *the Subjects of the Lord's Supper*—Mr. Palmer, in *his Scripture-Rail to the Lord's Table*—Mr. Saunders, in his *Anti-Diatribe*—Mr. Langley, in his *Suspension Reviewed*—Mr. Doolittle, Mr. Henry, Dr. Earle, and others, in their books on the *Lord's Supper*—Mr. Shower, in his *Sacramental Discourses*—Mr. Flavel, in his sermon on *Gospel-Unity*, and other pieces—Mr. Philip Henry, and Mr. Trosse, in the accounts of their *Lives*—Dr. Calamy, in his discourse on *Vows*, and his *Defence of Nonconformity*—Mr. Simon Browne, in the Continuation of *Henry's Exposition*, on 1 Cor. xi. 28—Dr. Harris, in his discourse on *Self-Dedication*—Dr. Jennings, in his sermons to *Young People*.—I could, from all these authors, cite passages much to the purpose; but it would be too tedious. Yet I will give you a few hints from some others.—Dr. Williams, in his *Gospel-Truth Stated*, says, Though a man had it revealed to him that he is one of the *elect*, yet so long as he remains *unregenerate*, he has no right to partake of the Lord's supper.—Dr. Guyse, in his late sermon at Mr. Gibbons's ordination observes, that men being *church-members* supposes them *already* to have a *good work begun* in them, and to be partakers of Christian *love*, even such as proceeds from *faith*, in a prevailing degree; and persons (says he) that have nothing of this, *ought not* to be church-members. Mr. Hall, in his *Exhortation* on the same occasion, remarks, that the seals of the covenant are to be used as *discriminating* signs of the real separation of true believers from the world; and urges to have the fence kept up, which Christ has set about his church, that it may appear to be a body wholly *distinct* from the world: God's house being erected for the entertainment, not of *hypocrites* and dead sinners, but of the living in Jerusalem.—But, says Dr. Watts, in his *Humble Attempt*, it is true, this cannot be practised universally and perfectly here on earth, so as to prevent some *secret* sinners making their way into our separate congregations, and joining with us in the most solemn ordinances; yet he declares such *not really worthy* of any room or place in the house of God. And in his *Holiness of Times, Places*,

and People, the Doctor observes, The *visible* Christian church is founded on a *supposition*, that the members of it are, or should appear to be, members of the *invisible:* And *none* (says he) are to be admitted into the *visible* church, or esteemed complete members of it, but those who make such a declaration and profession of their faith in Christ and their avowed subjection to him, as may be supposed in a judgment of charity to manifest them to be real believers, true subjects of his spiritual kingdom, and members of the *invisible* church.—I find Dr. Doddridge in the same sentiments, by what he says in his *Family-Expositor*. Thus, on the case of Ananias and Sapphira, he has this note: The *church* is never *happier*, than when the *sons of falsehood* are *deterred* from intruding into it: If its *members* are *less numerous*, it is a sufficient balance, that it is *more pure*. And on Simon's case, he pronounces it to be *in vain* for men to *profess* themselves *Christians*, in vain to submit to *baptism*, &c. if their *heart* be not *right with God*. And *such persons* being admitted to *distinguishing* ordinances, he calls an evil, in the present state of things unavoidable; wishing for the *happy medium* between *prostituting divine ordinances* by a foolish credulity, and *defrauding the children of the household of their bread*, by a rigorous severity and mistaken caution. He every where represents the Lord's supper as the sacrament of *nutrition*, a reviving and nourishing ordinance; but never that I can find, as a *regenerating* or *converting* one. Upon the case of Judas, the Doctor observes, that if he had truly stated the order of the story, then Judas certainly *went out* before the *Eucharist* was instituted: And indeed one cannot reasonably suppose Christ would have commanded him to *drink of this cup* as the *blood shed for* him *for the remission of sins*, when he had just before been declaring in effect, that *his* sins should *never* be forgiven. By which observation, I think, Dr. Doddridge has quite demolished one of the most plausible pleas in favour of the secret and conscious hypocrite's claim to the Lord's supper.

In fine, even those who appear advocates for a latitude in admissions to the communion, I observe generally in the course of the argument offer such *distinctions*, or make such *concessions*, as seem by fair consequence a giving up of the point, at least as stated in the present question. For they usually distinguish between a right *in foro Dei* and *in foro ecclesiæ;* accordingly treat these as two different questions, *Who ought to come?* and, *Who ought to be admitted?* considering the latter as an *ecclesiastical* case, and here they assert a *latitude;* but the former, as a case of *conscience*, of private reference only, and here they grant a *limitation*. How large soever their principles, while taking the case in its *ecclesiastical* view, yet I have met with very few divines, that, taking it as a *private case of conscience*, have gone

Mr. Stoddard's length, in asserting, that *some unsanctified men have right before God to the Lord's supper*, and *may come with a good conscience*, yea, *ought to come*, notwithstanding they *know* themselves at the same time to be in a *natural* condition. This he declares in his "Doctrine of Instituted Churches," and confirms in his "Sermon and Appeal." But then he has made some *concessions*, which seem to be subversive of his opinion. For he expressly allows, that the *sacrament* by institution supposes communicants to be *visible saints;* and this title of *visible saints* he assigns to "such as have a visible union to Christ, such as are in the judgment of rational charity believers, such as carry themselves so that there is reason to look upon them to be saints." Now, taking the case as a *private case of conscience*, (in which light only Mr. Stoddard professes to have designed to consider it in his sermon, and not at all as an *ecclesiastical* case,) I think, this *visibility of saintship* immediately respects the *proponant* for the Lord's table, and must be referred to his own *private judgment* of himself. But then, how can there be a *visibility of saintship* in the eye of the man's own conscience, when at the same time he *knows* himself to be in a *natural* condition! Or how can a man come to the Lord's table with a good *conscience*, as having *right before God*, while he cannot form so much as a judgment of *rational charity* for himself; seeing he carries so, in the view of his own *conscience*, that he has no *reason* to look on himself to be a *saint*, nay, even *knows* he is still in a natural state, and therefore in the eye of his own impartial judgment is not such a one as the *sacrament* by institution *supposes* the communicant to be! Moreover, Mr. Stoddard, in describing visible saints, inserts into their character *a serious profession of the true religion*, which he sometimes calls *a profession of faith and repentance, morally sincere:* And in his "Doctrine of Instituted Churches," (p. 19,) he lays down a remarkable position, in these words—SUCH A PROFESSION AS BEING SINCERE MAKES A MAN A REAL SAINT, BEING MORALLY SINCERE MAKES A MAN A VISIBLE SAINT. Now according to this, it seems to me, the *profession* itself, whether evangelically or morally sincere, is always of a *uniform tenor;* having one and the same thing for the *matter* of it; and not respecting, in the different cases, a religion *specifically* different, or a faith and repentance of a higher and a lower *kind*. But then it is quite beyond me to comprehend, how a man who *knows* himself to be in a *natural* condition, can be so much as *morally* sincere in his *profession*, while it is in its matter and tenor *such a profession as being* (evangelically) *sincere makes a man a real saint*. For if he *knows* himself to be in a *natural* condition, he

then as certainly *knows* he hath not (in the principle or exercise) that *faith and repentance*, which is the just matter of *such a profession*: and how therefore can he be reasonably supposed, with any degree of *moral sincerity*, to make *such a profession*, when for the matter of it, it is the very *same* profession he would make, if he *knew* himself to be a *real saint!* Can a person in any sound gospel sense profess himself a *saint* or *believing penitent*, and herein *speak the truth* with a common *moral honesty*, while yet he *knows* himself to be destitute of all such *characters* in the sight of God and conscience, being still in a *natural* condition, and under the dominion of *unbelief* and *impenitence!* For my own part, I must confess this a difficulty in Mr. Stoddard's scheme, that I am not capable of solving. His favourite hypothesis, I think, must fall, if his position stands, and his concessions be abode by; which serve clearly to determine the present question in the *negative*, agreeable to the general sense of Protestant churches and divines.

QUEST. III. *Whether it be not the general opinion, that persons admitted to the Lord's table ought to* PROFESS saving faith and repentance; *meaning that faith and repentance, which are the terms of the* covenant of grace.

ANSW. I believe, after what has been already offered, we need be at no loss to know the mind of the generality respecting the subject of this inquiry. Were there occasion for it, I could easily produce a *cloud of witnesses*, to evidence that the general opinion is on the *affirmative* side, in this question. Repeated searches have been made by diligent and impartial inquirers, who though of varying judgment and practice in church-discipline, yet agree in their reports: and from them I will give you the following attestations.

Mr. Lob (in his "True Dissenter") tells us, It is the judgment of all the *Nonconformists*, that nothing less than the *profession* of *saving faith*, credibly significant of the thing professed, gives right to church-communion. And this he declares to be the rule of *all Protestants* in general. He brings even Mr. Humphrey (though opposite in judgment) for his voucher: who acknowledges, That the *visible church* is defined by a *profession* of true regenerate faith, and of no less than that, according to the most *general* opinion of *Protestant divines*. He speaks of it as the *common opinion*, that a profession of no less than true grace or justifying faith is the *rule of admission* to the church-sacraments. And though Mr. Humphrey went off from the received opinion, yet could he not come into Mr. Blake's notions in this matter, who also had gone off from it, nor hope for their vindication: hence he makes that challenge, *What man is there, that*

dares revive Mr. Blake's cause, and defend it against Mr. Baxter's RIGHT *to sacraments!*

Mr. Baxter, in this his book, very copiously argues for a *profession* of *saving faith*, as the rule of admission to the sacraments, and much insists on its being so by the unanimous consent of judicious divines. He tells us, Mr. Gataker in his books has largely proved this by a multitude of quotations from Protestant writers. And he adds his own testimony, repeatedly saying, It is indeed their *most common* doctrine—it is the *common Protestant* doctrine. And again, certain I am, this is the *common* doctrine of reformed divines. He subjoins, I must profess, that I do not know of *any one Protestant* divine, reputed orthodox, of the contrary judgment, before Dr. Ward and Mr. Blake, though some Papists and Arminians I knew of that mind. And again, (beside Sir Henry Vane,) he says, *All* that I know of, since Dr. Ward, is Mr. Blake, Mr. Humphrey, and one John Timson; and John Timson, Mr. Humphrey, and Mr. Blake. He alleges Mr. Vines, as thus witnessing in the case on his side. To this purpose *all our learned divines* have given their suffrage: I need not number authors or churches. It is so plain a case, that I wonder those [of the contrary opinion] have not taken notice of it, *there is an army to a man against them.*

Mr. Langley, in his *Suspension Reviewed*, observes, The *concurrent judgment* of divines, English and Foreign, Episcopal and Presbyterian, that a man of vast and digested reading, the learned Mr. Baxter, hath demonstrated at large in SIXTY *testimonies;* sundry of which have *many* in them, being the judgment of many churches, and many *learned* men therein; and more might easily be brought. In short, he calls it the *old Protestant* doctrine asserted against the *Papists;* and wonders at the confidence of the men, who tell us against our own eyes, that it is a *novelism.*

To these attestations I subjoin that of our Mr. Mitchel, (in his Introduction before the *Defence of the Synod*, 1662,) who while asserting a different latitude of the two sacraments, yet pleads for strictness in admissions to the Lord's table; and testified, It is most evident, that *godly reforming divines* have in their doctrine *unanimously* taught, and in their practice (many of them) endeavoured, a *strict selection* of those who should be admitted to the *Lord's supper.* I think it may be not improperly observed here, that in a manuscript, drawn up by this eminent person for his own satisfaction, and inserted in the account of his life, he has left his solemn testimony against a lax *mode* of *profession*, (exclusive of all examinations and confessions, of a practical and experimental nature,) as having

been found by plentiful experience a *nurse* of *formality* and *irreligion*. At the same time declaring his judgment, with a particular eye to the churches of *New England*, that the *power of godliness* will be *lost*, if only *doctrinal* knowledge and *outward* behaviour come to be accounted sufficient for a title to all church-privileges; and the use of *practical confessions* and *examinations* of men's *spiritual* estate be laid aside. For (says he) that which people see to be publicly required and held in reputation, *that* will they look after, and usually *no more*. In another place he observes, this will not only lose the power of godliness, but in a little time bring in *profaneness*, and *ruin the churches*, these two ways. (1.) *Election of ministers* will soon be carried by a formal looser sort. (2.) The exercise of *discipline* will by this means be impossible.—And discipline failing, profaneness riseth like a flood. Agreeably he says elsewhere, Certain it is, that we stand for the *purity* of the churches, when we stand for *such qualifications* as we do, in those whom we would admit to *full communion*; and do withstand those notions and reasonings that would infer a *laxness* therein, which hath apparent *peril* in it. In sum (says he) we make account that we shall be near about the *middle-way* of church reformation, if we keep *baptism* within the compass of the *non-excommunicable*, and the *Lord's supper* within the compass of those that have (unto charity) somewhat of the *power* of godliness, or grace in *exercise*. For Mr. Mitchel, as he thought *faith in the special and lively* EXERCISE *thereof* necessary to a safe and comfortable participation of the *Lord's supper*, so he judged an *appearance* of this unto rational charity, judging by *positive sensible* signs and evidences, justly required in order to admission into *full communion*. Whereas he thought *baptism* annexed to *initial* faith, or faith in the *being* of it; the charitable judgment whereof (says he) runs upon a great *latitude*: and he conceived the same *strictness*, as to outward signs, not necessary unto a charitable probable judgment, or hope of the *being* of faith, which entitles to baptism, as of that *growth* and *special exercise* of faith, which is requisite to the Lord's supper. These are the main *distinctions*, on which he grounded his opinion of a *different* latitude of the two sacraments. For I must observe, as strenuously as he pleads for a various extent, as to the subject of them, he never supposes any adult regularly admittable to either sacrament, but such as in ecclesiastical reputation sustain the character of *believers;* such as in the account of a rational charity (judging by probable signs) have the being of *regeneration*; or as he variously expresses it, have *true faith*, in the judgment of charity; and do in *some measure* perform the duties of faith and obedience, as to *church-visibility*

and *charitable hope;* and therefore are such as the church ought to receive and hold as *heirs of the grace of life*, according to the rules of Christian charity. Though it seems, as Mr. Shepard before him speaks of his *church-charity* and *experimental charity;* so Mr. Mitchel had his *positive* charity and his *negative*, and conducted his judgment and administrations accordingly, in admitting persons to the one sacrament or the other. I should not have been so prolix and particular here, but that I thought it might serve to prepare the way for a more easy, short, and intelligible answer to your remaining queries.

QUESTION IV. *Whether it be the general opinion of Protestant churches and divines, in the case of* adult *persons, that the* terms *of admission to* both *sacraments are the* same?

ANSWER. I presume, Sir, the question does not respect a sameness in the *degree* of qualifications, experiences, and evidences; but only a sameness in *kind*, or for the substance and general nature of things. I suppose you had no view here to any such critical *distinction* as that before mentioned, between an *initial* faith and a *grown* faith; or between the simple *being* of faith, which entitleth to baptism, and the *special exercise* of faith, which fits for the Lord's supper; nor aim at a nice adjustment of the several *characters of visibility*, or *motives of credibility*, in the one case and the other; but only intend in general to inquire, whether persons admittable to one or other sacrament, ought to profess *true justifying faith*, and not be admitted on the profession of any faith of a kind *inferior* and *specifically* different. Now, taking this to be the scope of your question, I have good reason to apprehend, that the *generality* of Protestant churches and divines, of the Calvinistic persuasion especially, have declared themselves for the *affirmative*.

I think all that hold the *visible* Christian church ought to consist of such as make a *visible and credible profession of faith and holiness*, and *appear to rational charity real members of the church invisible*, (which is the common language of Protestants,) are to be understood as in principle exploding the conceit of a conscious unbeliever's right before God to special church-ordinances, and as denying the apparent unbeliever's right before the church to admission, whether to one sacrament or the other. I observe, *Eadem est ratio utriusque sacramenti*, is a maxim (in its general notion) espoused by the several contending parties in this controversy about a right to sacraments.

That a credible profession of saving faith and repentance is necessary to baptism, in the case of the adult, I can shew, by the authority of Claude's approved Defence of the Reformation, to be the general opinion of French Protestants: and by

the Palatine Catechism, by the Leyden professors' Synopsis, &c. to be the prevailing judgment of the Reformed in Germany, Holland, and foreign parts.

And for the Dissenters in England, that they are in general of the same judgment, I might prove from the Assembly of Divines' Confession, Catechisms and Directory; and from the Heads of Agreement assented to by the United Ministers, formerly distinguished by the names of Presbyterian and Congregational; as also by a large induction of particular instances among divines of every denomination, would it not carry me to too great a length. I find Mr. Lob (in his True Dissenter) assuring us in general, "It is held by the Dissenters, that nothing less than the *profession of a saving faith* gives right to baptism." Nor do I see by their writings of a later date and most in vogue, any just grounds to suppose a general change of sentiments among them. I will mention two or three moderns of distinguished name. Dr. Harris (in his Self-Dedication) tells us, The nature of the Lord's supper plainly supposes *faith;* and that none but *real* Christians have right in the sight of God: though a credible profession entitles to it in the sight of the church, who cannot know the heart. And he declares it the same *faith*, which qualifies the adult, both for baptism and for the *Lord's supper;* there being the same common nature to both sacraments, and the latter only a *recognizing* the former. The late Dr. Watts (in his Holiness of Times, Places, and People,) says, The Christian church receives none but upon profession of *true* faith in Christ, and *sincere* repentance; none but those who profess to be members of the *invisible* church, and in a judgment of charity are to be so esteemed. Our *entrance* into it is appointed to be by a visible *profession* of our being *born of God*, of real faith in Christ, of true repentance, and inward holiness. In fine, to name no more, Dr. Doddridge (in his Family Expositor, on Acts viii. 37,) supposes a credible *profession* of their *faith in Christ* required of the adult in apostolic times, in order to their being admitted to baptism; even such (says he) as implied their cordially subjecting their souls to the gospel, and their being come to a point, so as to give up themselves to Christ *with all their heart.*

And for the church of Scotland, Mr. Anderson, who well understood their principles and practice, assures us (in his Defence of them,) that Presbyterians will not baptize without a previous profession or sponsion. To the adult (says he) it is not only necessary (as it is also in infants) that they be *internally sanctified*, but also that they make an *outward profession*, of which baptism is the badge and token. To justify this, he observes concerning the Catechumens in primitive times, that

during all that state they were probationers, not only as to their knowledge, but piety; and were obliged, before they could be admitted to *baptism*, to give moral evidences of the *grace of God in their hearts*. And he advances it as a Presbyterian principle, that *faith* and *repentance* are *pre-required* to baptism, in adult persons at least. By this he points out the true *matter* of baptismal profession: And then in opposition to such as pretend baptism to be a *converting* ordinance, he observes, If they can have *faith* and *repentance* without the *Spirit* and spiritual *regeneration*, which they say is not obtained but *in* and *by baptism*, I do not see why they may not go to *heaven* without the Spirit and spiritual regeneration: For I am sure, *repentance* toward God and *faith* toward our Lord Jesus Christ, is the sum of the gospel.—Mr. Warden, another of their noted writers, (in his Essay on Baptism,) says in the name of Presbyterians, we think that baptism *supposeth* men *Christians;* else they have *no right* to baptism, the seal of Christianity; all seals in their nature, supposing the *thing* that is sealed. He that is of adult age, is to *profess* his *faith* in Christ and his *compliance* with the whole device of salvation, *before* he can have the seal of the covenant administered to him. The author of the Defence of National Churches (thought to be Mr. Willison) says, I know nothing more requisite to admission to the Lord's supper, *in foro ecclesiastico*, than unto baptism in an adult person; they being both seals of the same covenant. And he thinks the objects of church-fellowship are "all who profess to accept the offers of Christ's grace, with subjection to his ordinances, and a suitable walk, and who confess themselves sincere."

I have reserved Mr. Baxter for my last witness, because his attestation is comprehensive and of a general aspect. In his Disputations of Right to Sacraments, and other writings, he repeatedly declares, "It hath been the constant principle and practice of the *universal* church of Christ, to require a *profession* of saving *faith* and *repentance*, as necessary before they would *baptize;* and not to baptize any upon the profession of any *lower* kind of faith. He must shut his eyes against the fullest evidence of history and church-practice, who will deny this. I desire those otherwise minded to help me to an instance of any *one* approved baptism, since Christ's time or his apostles upon the account of a *faith* that was *short* of *justifying*, and not upon the profession of a justifying faith. Hitherto this is not done by them, but the contrary is fully done by others, and yet they confidently except against my opinion as a *novelty*. Mr. Gataker's books have multitudes of sentences recited out of our Protestant divines, that affirm this which they call *new*. It is indeed the

common *Protestant* doctrine, that the sacraments do *presuppose* remission of sins, and our faith; that they are instituted to signify these *as in being;* and do solemnize and publicly own and confirm the mutual covenant *already* entered in heart. The Jesuits themselves do witness this to be the ordinary *Protestant* doctrine. It seems not necessary to mention the judgment of our reformed divines, as expressed in any of their particular sayings, when their public confession and practices are so satisfactory herein." Mr. Baxter, however, recites a multitude of their testimonies; producing the judgment of Luther, Calvin, Beza, Peter Martyr, Piscator, Melancthon, Altingius, Junius, Polanus, Zanchius, Ursinus, Paræus, Bucanus, Musculus, professores Leyd. et Salm: Wollebius, Vossius, Wendeline, Keckerman, Bullinger, Alsted, Deodate, Dr. Ames, Dr. Moulin: The Catechism of the Church of England, and English divines; Bp. Usher, Dr. Willet, Dr. Fulk, Dr. Prideaux, Dr. Whitaker, Mr. Yates, Perkins, Cartwright, &c.: The Scottish Church in their Heads of Church-policy, and Divines of Scotland; Mr. Gillespie, Mr. Rutherford, and Mr. Wood: The Westminster Assembly of Divines; their Confession, Cathechisms, and Directory: The Annot. of some of those divines, &c. And for the *reformed* churches in general (Mr. Baxter observes,) it is past all question, by their constant *practice*, that they require the profession of a *saving* Christian faith, and take not up with any *lower*. And respecting the then practice in England, he says, This is manifest by our daily administration of baptism. I never heard (says he) any man baptize an infant but upon the parent's or susceptor's, or offerer's *profession* of a *justifying faith*.

This leads to your last inquiry.

Question V. *Whether it be the general opinion, that the* same qualifications *are required in a* parent *bringing his child to baptism, as in an* adult *person for his own admission to this ordinance?*

Answer. Here, Sir, I suppose you intend only the same qualifications in *kind;* or a profession and visibility, in some degree, of the *same sort* of faith and repentance; meaning that which is truly evangelical and saving. And understanding you in this sense, I am persuaded, by all I can observe, that the generality of Protestants are in the *affirmative;* not assenting to a specific and essential difference, whatever circumstantial and gradual disparity they may allow, between the two cases you mention.

Mr. Baxter, speaking of the judgment and practice of the Christian *fathers*, tells us, that faith (justifying faith, and not another kind of faith) was supposed to be in the parent, for him-

self and his seed: Because the condition or qualification of the infant is but this, that he be the *seed* of a *believer*. And he thinks the generality of the reformed are in these sentiments. He declares his own judgment in full concurrence herewith, and backs the same with a variety of arguments, in his Five Disputations, and other writings. He observes, it seems strange to him that any should imagine, a lower belief in the parent will help his *child* to a title to baptism, than that which is necessary to *his own*, if he were unbaptized; because mutual consent is necessary to mutual covenant, and the covenant *must* be mutual. No man hath right to God's part, that refuseth his own: They that have no right to remission of sins, have no right given them by God to baptism. If God be not at all actually obliged in covenant to any ungodly man, then he is not obliged to give him baptism: But God is not obliged so to him. Most of our divines make the contrary doctrine Pelagianism, that God should be obliged to man in a state of nature in such a covenant. If the parent's title be questionable, (says he,) the infant's is so too; because the ground is the same: And it is from the parent, that the child must derive it; nor can any man give that which he hath not. We ought not (says he) to baptize those persons, or their children, as theirs, who are visible members of the kingdom of the devil, or that do not so much as profess their forsaking the devil's kingdom: But such are all that profess not a saving faith. If such are not visibly *in* the kingdom of the devil, at least they are not visibly *out* of it. All that are duly baptized, are baptized *into* Christ; therefore they are supposed to possess that *faith* by which men are united or ingrafted into Christ: But that is only justifying faith. Tell me (says he) where any man was ever said in scripture to be united to Christ, without saving faith, or profession of it. In a word, Mr. Baxter takes occasion to declare himself in this manner: If Mr. Blake exacts not a profession of *saving* faith and repentance, I say he makes *foul work* in the church. And when such foul work shall be voluntarily *maintained*, and the word of God abused for the *defilement* of the church and ordinances of God, it is a greater scandal to the *weak* and to the *schismatics*, and a greater reproach to the church, and a sadder case to considerate men, than the too common pollutions of others, which are merely through *negligence*, but not justified and defended.

We are told by other impartial inquirers, that *all* the reformed do in their directories and practices require professions, as well as promises, of *parents*, bringing their children to baptism; even professions of present faith and repentance, as well as promises of future obedience; and these not merely of the moral, but the evangelical kind. The judgment of the Church

of Scotland may be known by their adopting the Confession, Catechisms, and Directory of the Assembly of Divines; who, when they require a *parental* profession (as in their Catechisms, &c.) intend it not of any *lower* kind, than a true gospel faith and obedience. The mind of the Dissenters may be very much judged of by the reformed liturgy, presented in their name upon King Charles's restoration; where parents' *credible* profession of their faith, repentance, and obedience, is required in order to the baptism of their children. I might bring further evidence from the writings of particular divines among them, ancient and modern: But I must for brevity omit this. Only I will give you a specimen in two or three hints. Mr. Charnock, that great divine, observes, "Baptism *supposes* faith in the adult, and the profession of faith in the parent for his child." The late eminent Dr. Watts, in his Holiness of Times, Places, and People, thus declares himself, with respect to the infants of *true* believers: "In my opinion, so far as they are any way members of the *visible* Christian church, it is upon *supposition* of their being (with their *parents*) members of the *invisible* church of God."

On the whole, as to our fathers here in New England, it is true, they asserted a *baptism-right* in parents for themselves and children, whom yet they excluded from full communion; the ground of which difference was hinted before: And they denied a parity of reason between the two cases now in view, on some accounts. Their chief ground was, that *adult baptism* requires a measure of visible *moral fitness* or inherent holiness in the recipient; whereas, *infant baptism* requires nothing visible in its subject, but a *relative fitness* or federal holiness, the *formalis ratio* of infant-membership, accruing from God's charter of grace to his church, taking in the infant-seed with the believing parent. Baptism they supposed to run parallel with regular membership; and the child of such a parent entitled to this covenant-seal in its own right, on the foot of a distinct personal membership, derivative in point of *being*, but independent for its *duration*, and for the privileges annexed to it by divine institution. However, they certainly owned *parental* profession, as belonging to the due order and just manner of administration, both *meet* and *needful*. Accordingly they provided, that *parents* claiming covenant-privileges for their children, should own their covenant-state, have a measure of covenant-qualifications, and do covenant-duties, in some degree, to the satisfaction of a rational charity. And it ought to be remembered, they have left it as their solemn judgment, that even taking *baptism-right* for a right of *fitness in foro ecclesiastico*, still the parents whose children they claimed baptism for, were such as must be allowed to have a title to it for *themselves*, in case they had remained unbaptized:

Looking upon them, although not duly fitted for the sacrament of communion and confirmation, yet sufficiently so for the sacrament of union and initiation; professors in their infancy *parentally*, and now *personally*, in an initial way; appearing Abraham's children, in some measure of *truth*, to a judicious charity; justly therefore baptizable, in their persons and offspring, by all the rules of the gospel. I am not here to argue upon the justness of this scheme of thought on the case; but only to represent the fact in a genuine light.

I have no room, Sir, for any further remarks. But must conclude, with Christian salutes, and the tender of every brotherly office, from

Your very affectionate Friend
and humble Servant,
THOMAS FOXCROFT.

Boston, *June* 26, 1749.

MISREPRESENTATIONS CORRECTED,

AND

TRUTH VINDICATED,

IN

A REPLY

TO THE

REV. MR. SOLOMON WILLIAMS'S BOOK,

ENTITLED,

THE TRUE STATE OF THE QUESTION CONCERNING THE QUALIFICATIONS NECESSARY TO LAWFUL COMMUNION IN THE CHRISTIAN SACRAMENTS.

Prov. xii. 17. He that speaketh Truth, sheweth forth Righteousness.
Chap. xxii. 20, 21. Have I not written to thee excellent things in Counsels and Knowledge; That I might make thee know the Certainty of the Words of Truth, that thou mightest answer the Words of Truth to them that send unto thee?

THE PREFACE.

Since I have been so repeatedly charged by Mr. Williams, with indecent and injurious treatment of Mr. Stoddard, (whom doubtless I ought to treat with much respect,) I may expect, from what appears of Mr. Williams's disposition this way, to be charged with ill treatment of *him* too. I desire therefore that it may be justly considered by the reader, what is, and what is not, injurious or unhandsome treatment of an author in a controversy. And here I would crave leave to say, that I humbly conceive, a distinction ought to be made between opposing and exposing a *cause*, or the *arguments* used to defend it, and reproaching *persons*. He is a weak writer indeed, who undertakes to confute an opinion, but dares not expose the nakedness and absurdity of it, nor the weakness or inconsistence of the methods taken and arguments used by any to maintain it, for fear he should be guilty of speaking evil of these things, and be charged with reproaching them. If an antagonist is angry at this, he thereby gives his readers too much occasion of suspicion towards himself, as chargeable with weakness, or bitterness.

I therefore now give notice, that I have taken full liberty in this respect; only endeavouring to avoid pointed and exaggerating expressions. If to set forth what I suppose to be the true absurdity of Mr. Williams's scheme, or any part of it, that it may be viewed justly in all its nakedness; withal observing the *weakness* of the defence he has made, not fearing to shew *wherein* it is weak, and how the badness of his *cause* obliges him to be *inconsistent* with himself, inconsistent with his own professed principles in religion, and with things conceded and asserted by him in the book especially under consideration; and declaring particularly wherein I think his arguments fail, whether it be in *begging the question*, or being impertinent and *beside* the question, or arguing in effect against himself: also observing wherein Mr. W. has made *misrepresentations* of words or things;—I say, if to do these things be reproaching *him*, and injurious treatment of him, then I have injured him. But I think I should be foolish, if I were afraid to do *that* (and to do it as thoroughly as I can) *which must be the design* of my writing, if I write at all in opposition to his tenets, and to the defence he makes of them.

Indeed if I misrepresent what he says, in order to make it appear in the worst colours; altering his words to another sense, to

make them appear more ridiculous; or adding other words, that carried the sense beyond the proper import of his words, to heighten the supposed absurdity, and give me greater advantage to exclaim; if I set myself to aggravate matters and strain them beyond bounds, making mighty things of mere trifles; or if I use exclamations and invectives, instead of arguments; then Mr. W. might have just cause to complain, and the reader would have just reason for disgust. But whether I have done so, or not, must be judged by the reader; of whom I desire nothing more than the most impartial and exact consideration of the merits of the cause, and examination of the force and weight of every argument. I desire, that no bitter reproachful invectives, no vehement exclamations, no supercilious assuming words and phrases may be taken for reasoning, on either side. If the reader thinks he finds any such in what I have written, I am willing he should set them aside as nothing worth; carefully distinguishing between them, and the strength of the argument. I desire not, that the cause should be judged of by the skill which either Mr. *W.* or *I* do manifest, in flinging one at another.

If in places where the argument pinches most, and there is the greatest appearance of strong reason, in Mr. W.'s book, I do (as some other disputants) instead of entering thoroughly into the matter, begin to flounce and fling, and divert the reader's attention to the argument by the noise of big words, or magisterial and disdainful expressions; let the reader take it (as justly he may) for a shrewd sign of a consciousness of the weakness of my cause in that particular, or at least of a distrust of my own ability to defend myself well in the reader's apprehension, and to come off with a good grace any other way.

In this case, I shall not think it any injustice done me by the reader, though he suspects that I feel myself pressed, and begin to be in trouble, for fear I should not seem to come off like a champion, if I should trust to mere reasoning. I can uprightly say, I never have endeavoured by such means to evade a proper consideration of any part of Mr. W.'s reasoning; nor have designedly contrived, in this or any other method, to free myself from the trouble of a just answer to any thing material in his book; and I have been especially careful to speak most particularly to the main parts of his scheme, and such of his reasonings as I could suppose those of his readers who are on his side, would be most likely to have their chief dependence on, and to think most difficult to be answered.

With regard to my *method* in this reply, I judged it most convenient to reduce my remarks on Mr. W.'s principles, and the parts of his scheme, and kinds of arguing, which repeatedly appear in various parts of his book, to their *proper heads*. I thought, this tended to give the reader a clearer and more comprehensive view of the whole controversy, and the nature of the arguments; and that it also would make my work the shorter. For otherwise, I must have had the same thing or things of the same nature, to have observed often, as I found them repeated in different parts of this book, and the same remarks to make over and over again.—And that the reader may not be with-

out any advantages which he might have had in the other method, of keeping, in my reply, to the order in which things lie in the book answered, following my author from one page and paragraph to another, I have therefore subjoined a table, by which the reader may readily turn to what is said on each particular, that is wont to be brought in this debate, on one side or the other.*

With regard to my *citations* from Mr. W.'s book, I have never designedly altered his words: And where I have for brevity's sake referred to any sentiment of his, without citing the words at large, I have used care not to change or heighten the sense, or in any respect to vary from the just import of what he delivers. And that the reader may himself more easily and readily judge of the fairness of my citations and references, I have mentioned the *page*, and the *part* of the page, where the thing referred to is to be found: Supposing each page to be divided into five equal parts, I have noted the several parts of the page by the letters *a. b. c. d. e.* So that when I have referred to the *top* of the page, or the first fifth part of it, I have mentioned the number of the page, and added the letter *a.* to the number: and if the *middle*, or third fifth part, then I have added the letter *c.*—and so of the rest, as the reader will see. I have ever done thus, unless the thing referred to is to be found through the whole or great part of the page. I have also done the same very often, where I have occasion to cite other authors. Only when I have *before* quoted the same thing, I am not always so exact and particular in noting the place again, in my *second* quotation or reference.

* This is now incorporated with the general Index.

MISREPRESENTATIONS CORRECTED,

AND

TRUTH VINDICATED.

PART I.

THE GENERAL MISREPRESENTATIONS MR. WILLIAMS MAKES CONCERNING THE BOOK HE WRITES AGAINST.

SECT. I.

Concerning the Design of my writing and publishing my Book and the Question debated in it.

Mr. Williams asserts it to be my professed and declared design, in writing the book which he has undertaken to answer, to oppose Mr. Stoddard. He has taken a great liberty in this matter. He charges me with a declared design of writing in opposition to Mr. Stoddard, no less than nine or ten times in his book. And he does not content himself merely with saying, there are passages in my Preface, or elsewhere, whence this may be inferred; but he says expressly, That I profess to be disputing against Mr. Stoddard's doctrine (p. 14. *d.*) That I tell my readers, I am disputing against Mr. Stoddard's question, (p. 37. *d.*) That I tell them so in my Preface, (p. 107. *d.*) That I often declare that I am opposing Mr. Stoddard's opinion, (p. 132. *d.*) And on this foundation he charges me with blotting a great deal of paper, dis-serving the cause of truth by changing the ques-

tion, and putting it in such terms as Mr. S. expressly disclaims, and then confuting it as Mr. S—d's principle; unfair treatment of Mr. S. (p. 2. *d. e.*)—surprisingly going off from Mr. S——d's argument to cast an odium upon it, treating Mr. S. and his doctrine in such a manner as to reproach him and his principles, tending to render them odious to the unthinking multitude, and telling a manifest untruth, (p. 14. *d.* and 15. *c. d.*) Whereas, I never once signified it to be the thing I aimed at, to oppose Mr. Stoddard, or appear as his antagonist. But the very reverse was true; and meddling with him, or what he had said, I studied to avoid, as much as the circumstances of the debate with my people would allow, who had been taught by him, and who so greatly and continually alleged against me the things which he had said. Nor is there any appearance in those passages Mr. W. cites from my preface, that this was the thing I aimed at. Nay, one of those passages which he produces to prove it, shews the contrary: as it shews, that what I wrote being not consistent with, but opposite to what Mr. S. had maintained, was an unsought for and unpleasing circumstance of that publication. My words are, "It is far from a pleasing circumstance of this publication, that it is against what my honoured grandfather strenuously maintained, both from the pulpit and the press." Certainly my *regretting* and *excusing* such an unavoidable circumstance was a thing exceeding diverse from giving notice to the world, that the thing I aimed at was to set myself up as Mr. Stoddard's antagonist, and to write an answer to, and confute what he had written. It will, at first sight, be manifest to every impartial reader, that the design of my Preface was not to state the subject and intention of the book. This is done professedly, and very particularly afterwards, in the first part of the Essay itself. And if I might have common justice, surely I might be allowed to tell my own opinion, and declare my own design, without being so confidently and frequently charged with *misrepresenting* my own thoughts and intentions.

The very *nature of the case* is such as must lead every impartial person to a conviction, that the design of my writing must be to defend myself, in that controversy which I had with my people at Northampton; as it is notorious and publicly known, that *that controversy* was the occasion of my writing; and that therefore my business must be to defend that opinion or position of *mine* which I had declared to them, which had been the occasion of the controversy, and so the grand subject of debate between us; whether this were exactly agreeable to any words that might be found in Mr. Stoddard's writings on the subject, or not. Now this opinion or position was the same with that which I expressed in the first part of my book. In such terms I expressed myself to the committee of the church, when I first

made that declaration of my opinion, which was the beginning of the controversy, and when writing in defence of my opinion was first proposed. And this was the point continually talked of in all conversation at Northampton, for more than two years, even till Mr. W.'s book came out. The controversy was, Whether there was any need of making a credible profession of godliness, in order to persons being admitted to full communion; whether they must profess saving faith, or whether a profession of common faith were not sufficient; whether persons must be esteemed truly godly, and must be taken in under that notion, or whether if they appeared morally sincere, that were not sufficient? And when my book came abroad, there was no objection made, that I had not truly expressed the subject of debate in stating the question: But the subject of debate afterwards, in parish-meetings, church-meetings, and in all conversation, was the question laid down in my book. No suggestion existed among them, that the profession persons made in Mr. Stoddard's way, was taken as a profession of real godliness, or gospel-holiness; or that they were taken in under a notion of their being truly pious persons, as M. W. would have it. There was no suggestion, that the dispute was only about the degree of evidence: but what was the thing to be made evident; whether real godliness, or moral sincerity? It was constantly insisted on, with the greatest vehemence, that it was not saving religion, which needed to be professed, or pretended to; but another thing, religion of a lower kind. The public acts of the church and parish, from time to time, shew, that the point in controversy was, Whether the professors of godliness, only, ought to be admitted? Public votes, of which I made a record, were several times passed to know the church's mind concerning the admission of those who are able and willing to make a profession of godliness; using these terms. And once it was passed, That such should not be admitted in the way of publicly making such a profession. And at another time the vote passed, That the admission of such persons in such a way (described in the same words) should not be referred to the judgment of certain neighbouring ministers. At another time, it was insisted on by the parish, in a parish-meeting, That I should put a vote in the church, in these words, Whether there be not a dispute between Mr. Edwards, pastor of the church, and the church, respecting the question he hath argued in his book last published? And accordingly the vote was put and affirmed, in a church-meeting, in the same terms. And this was the question I insisted on in my public lectures at Northampton, appointed for giving the reasons of my opinion. My doctrine was in these words,—It is the mind and will of God, that none should be admitted to full communion in the church of Christ, but such as in profession, and in the eye of

a reasonable judgment, are truly saints, or godly persons. The town was full of objections against those sermons: but none, as ever I heard, objected, that my doctrine was *beside the controversy*. And this was all along the point of difference between me and the neighbouring ministers. This was the grand subject of debate with them, at a meeting of ministers, appointed on purpose for conference on the subject. It was wholly concerning the matter of profession, or the *thing* to be exhibited and made evident or visible; and not about the *manner* of professing, and the *degree* of evidence. And this was the doctrine directly opposed by Mr. A—y, one of the neighbouring ministers, whom my people had got as their champion to defend their cause in the pulpit at Northampton. Thus one of the corollaries he drew from his doctrine (as it was taken from his mouth in writing) was, That "a man may be a visible saint, and yet there be no sufficient grounds for our charity, that he is regenerate." Quite contrary to what Mr. W. maintains. Another of his corollaries was in these words, "A minister or church may judge a man a saint, and upon good grounds, and not have grounds to judge him regenerate." He proposed this inquiry, "Do not such as join themselves to the church, covenant not only to be visible saints but saints in heart?" The answer was in the negative; quite contrary to Mr. W. Another was, "Does not a visible saint imply a visibility of grace, or an appearance of it?" The answer was, "Not always." Quite contrary to Mr. W. Another was, "Is it not hypocrisy in any man, to make a profession of religion, and join himself to the church, and not have grace?" The answer was in the negative; also quite contrary to Mr. W. But these sermons of Mr. A—y, were highly approved by the generality of the people of Northampton, as agreeable to their minds.

And the controversy, as I have stated it in my book, was that in which the church and I appeared before the council, who determined our separation, when we each of us declared our sentiments before them. The point of difference was entirely the *matter* of profession, and the *thing* to be made *visible:* not the *degree* of evidence or *visibility*. No hint was given as though we both agreed, that true piety or gospel-holiness was the thing to be made visible, and that such only should be received as are truly godly persons in the eye of the church's judgment, (as Mr. W. holds,) and that we only differed about the proper grounds of such a judgment.

And therefore it is apparent, this controversy and its consequences, were the ground of my separation from my people; and not any thing like the controversy which Mr. W. professes to manage in his answer. This controversy, when it came out in Mr. W—'s book, was new in Northampton, and entirely alien from all the dispute which had filled that part of the country.

and a great part of New-England, with noise and uproar, for about two years and a half. The thing which Mr. W. over and over allows to be true, was the very same, both in effect and in terms, which the people had been most vehemently fighting against, from week to week, and from month to month, during all this time. And therefore the design of my writing led and obliged me to maintain that position or doctrine of mine, which was the occasion of this debate.

And be it so, that I did suppose this position was contrary to Mr. Stoddard's opinion, and was opposed by him,* and therefore thought fit in my Preface to excuse myself to the world for differing from him; did this oblige me, in all that I wrote for maintaining my position, to keep myself strictly to the words which he had expressed his question in, and to regulate and limit myself in every argument I used, and objection I answered, by the terms which he made use of in proposing his opinion and arguments? And if I have not done it, do I therefore deserve to be charged before the world with changing the question, with unfair treatment of Mr. Stoddard, with surprisingly going off from his argument, with dis-serving the cause of truth, &c.?

It would have been no great condescension in Mr. W. if he had allowed that *I* knew what the question was, which was disputed between me and my people, as well as *he*, in a distant part of the country. Yea, if he had acknowledged, that I was as likely as he, to understand Mr. Stoddard's real sentiments and practice; since I was in the ministry two years with him, as co-pastor of the same church, and was united with him in ecclesiastical administrations, in admitting members, and in examining them as to their qualifications. I have stood for more than twenty-three years in a pastoral relation to his church, most intimately acquainted with the nature of its constitution, its sentiments and method of administration, and all its religious concerns. I have myself been immediately concerned in the admission of more than three-quarters of its present members, and have had the greatest occasion to look into their way of admission, and have been acquainted with every living member that Mr. S. had admitted before my coming; and have been particularly informed, by many of them, of the manner of Mr. S—d's conduct in admitting them, their own apprehensions concerning the terms of their admission, and the profession they made in order to it; and also the sentiments of the whole of that large town, who were born and brought up under his ministry, concerning his constant doctrine and practice, relating to the admis-

* Whether I was mistaken in this, will appear in the sequel.

sion of members, from their infancy.—Whereas, Mr. W. from his youth had lived in another part of the country, at seventy miles distance.

SECT. II.

Mr. Williams's misrepresentations of the principles and tenets, delivered in the book which he undertakes to answer.

Mr. W. very greatly misrepresents my opinion, and the principles I maintain in my book, in many respects.

I. He says, (p. 5. *d.*) "The whole argument, and indeed the whole controversy, turns upon this single point, viz. What is that evidence, which by divine appointment the church is to have, of the saintship of those who are admitted to the outward privileges of the covenant of grace? Mr. Edwards seems to suppose, this must be the highest evidence a man can give of sincerity; and I apprehend to be the lowest evidence the nature of the thing will admit."—But this is very strange, since I had particularly declared in my stating of the question, (p. 5.) that the evidence I insisted on, was some outward manifestation, that ordinarily rendered the thing probable. Which shews, that all I insisted on, was only, that the evidence should amount to probability. And if the nature of the case will admit of some lower kind of evidence than this, or if there be any such thing as a sort of evidence that does not so much as amount to probability, then it is possible that I may have some controversy with him and others about the degree of evidence. Otherwise it is hard to conceive, how he should contrive to make out a controversy with me.

But that the reader may better judge, whether Mr. W. truly represents me as supposing that the evidence which should be insisted on, is the highest evidence a man can give of sincerity, I would here insert an extract of a Letter which I wrote to the Rev. Mr. Peter Clark of Salem-Village, a twelve-month before Mr. W—'s book was published. The original is doubtless in Mr. Clark's hands. In that letter, I declare my sentiments in the following words:

"It does not belong to the controversy between me and my people, how particular or large the profession should be that is required. I should not choose to be confined to exact limits as to that matter. But rather than contend, I should content myself with a few words, briefly expressing the cardinal virtues, or acts implied in a hearty compliance with the covenant of grace;

the profession being made (as should appear by inquiry into the person's doctrinal knowledge,) understandingly; if there were an external conversation agreeable thereto. Yea, I should think that such a person, solemnly making such a profession, had a right to be received as the object of a public charity, however he himself might scruple his own conversion, on account of his not remembering the time, not knowing the method of his conversion, or finding so much remaining sin, &c. And (if his own scruples did not hinder,*) I should think a minister or church had no right to debar such a professor, though he should say, he did not think himself converted. For I call that a profession of godliness, which is a profession of the great things wherein godliness consists, and not a profession of his own opinion of his good estate."

Northampton, May 7, 1750.

In like manner, I explained my opinion, very particularly and expressly before the council that determined my separation from my people, and before the church in a very public manner in the meeting-house, many people being present, near a year before Mr. W.'s book was published. And to make it the more sure, that what I maintained might be well observed, I afterwards sent in the foregoing extract of my letter to Mr Clark of Salem Village, into the council. And, as I was informed, it was particularly taken notice of in the council, and handed round among them, to be read by them.

The same council, having heard that I had made certain drafts of the covenant, or forms of a public profession of religion, which I stood ready to accept of from the candidates for communion, they, for their further information, sent for them. Accordingly I sent them four distinct drafts or forms, which I had drawn up about a twelvemonth before, (near two years before the publishing of Mr. W.'s book,) as what I stood ready to accept of, (any one of them,) rather than contend and break with my people.—The two shortest of those forms were as follows.

One of them was;

"I hope, I do truly find a heart to give up myself wholly to God, according to the tenor of that covenant of grace which

* I added this, because I supposed that such persons as judge themselves unconverted, if of my principles respecting qualifications for communion, would scruple coming, and could not come with a good conscience; But if they were of Mr. S——d's principles, viz. that unconverted men might lawfully come, neither a man's being of that opinion, nor his judging himself unconverted, would hinder my receiving him who exhibited proper evidence to the church of his being a convert.

was sealed in my baptism, and to walk in a way of that obedience to all the commandments of God, which the covenant of grace requires, as long as I live.

The other;

"I hope, I truly find in my heart a willingness to comply with all the commandments of God, which require me to give up myself wholly to him, and to serve him with my body and my spirit; and do accordingly now promise to walk in a way of obedience to all the commandments of God, as long as I live."

Now the reader is left to judge, whether I insist, as Mr. W. represents, that persons must not be admitted without the highest evidence a man can give of sincerity.

II. Mr. W. is abundant in suggesting and in insinuating to his readers, that the opinion laid down in my book is, That persons ought not to be admitted to communion without an absolute and peremptory determination in those who admit them, that they are truly godly; because I suppose it to be necessary, that there should be a positive judgment in their favour.

Here I desire the reader to observe, that the word positive is used in two senses. (1.) Sometimes it is put in opposition to doubtful, or uncertain: and then it signifies the same as certain, peremptory, or assured. But (2.) The word positive is very often used in a different sense; not in opposition to doubtful, but in opposition to negative: and so understood, it signifies very much the same as real or actual. Thus, we often speak of a negative good, and a positive good. A negative good is a mere negation or absence of evil; but a positive good is something more,—some real, actual good, instead of evil. So there is a negative charity, and a positive charity. A negative charity is a mere absence of an ill judgment of a man or forbearing to condemn him. Such a charity a man may have towards any stranger he transiently sees in the street, that he never saw or heard any thing of before. A positive charity is something further than merely not condemning, or not judging ill, it implies a good thought of a man. The reader will easily see that the word positive, taken in this sense, is an exceeding different thing from certain or peremptory. A man may have something more than a mere negative charity towards another, or a mere forbearing to condemn him; he may actually entertain some good thought of him, and yet there may be no proper peremptoriness, no pretence of any certainty in the case.

Now it is in this sense I use the phrase, positive judgment, viz. in opposition to a mere negative charity; as I very plainly express the matter, and particularly and fully explain myself

in stating the question. In my inquiry (p. 5.) I have the following words: "By Christian judgment, I intend something further than a kind of mere negative charity, implying that we forbear to censure and condemn a man, because we do not know but that he may be godly, and therefore forbear to proceed on the foot of such a censure or judgment in our treatment of him; as we would kindly entertain a stranger, not knowing but, in so doing, we entertain an angel, or precious saint of God: But I mean a positive judgment, founded on some positive appearance or visibility, some outward manifestation that ordinarily renders the thing probable. There is a difference between suspending our judgment, or forbearing to condemn, or having some hope that possibly the thing may be so, and so hoping the best, and a positive judgment in favour of a person. For having some hope, only implies, that a man is not in utter despair of a thing; though his prevailing opinion may be otherwise, or he may suspend his opinion."

Here, I think, my meaning is very plainly and carefully explained. However, in as much as the word positive is sometimes used for peremptory or certain, Mr. W. catches at the term, and lays fast hold of the advantage he thinks this gives him, and is abundant, all over his book, in representing as though I insisted on a positive judgment in this sense. So he applies the word, referring to my use of it, from time to time. Thus, (p. 69. *b.*) "If there be any thing in this argument, I think it must be what I have observed, viz. That a Christian must make a positive judgment and determination, that another man is a saint, and this judgment must have for its ground something which he supposes is, at least ordinarily, a certain evidence of his saintship, and by which gracious sincerity is certainly distinguished from every thing else." And (p. 141 *a.*) "The notion of men's being able and fit to determine positively the condition of other men, or the certainty of their gracious state, has a direct tendency to deceive the souls of men." And thus Mr. W. makes mention of a positive judgment above forty times in his book, with reference to my use of it, and to my declared opinion of its necessity; and every where plainly uses the phrase in that sense, for absolute and peremptory, in opposition to doubtfulness; continually insinuating, that this is what I professedly insist on. Whereas every act of the judgment whatsoever, is a positive judgment in the sense in which I have fully declared I use it, viz. in opposition to negative; which is no act, but a mere withholding of the act of the judgment, or forbearing any actual judgment.* Mr. W. himself does abun-

* Mr. John Glas, in his "Observes upon the original Constitution of the Christian Church", (p. 55, 56.) says as follows. "You seem to have a great prejudice at what you call positive evidences, and judging upon them in the

dantly suppose, that there must be a positive judgment in this sense. He grants the very thing, though he rejects the term. For he holds, there must be such a visibility as makes persons to appear to be real saints. (p. 5. *b.*)—He allows, that the moral image of God or Christ must appear, or be supposed to be in them, as the ground and reason of our charity; and that there must be some apprehension, some judgment of mind, of the saintship of persons, for its foundation. (p. 68. *c. d. e.* & 69. *a.* 71. *d.*) —That they must have such a character appearing in them. (p. 55. *e.*)—That there must be a judgment founded on moral evidence of gospel-holiness. (p. 139. *d.*)

III. Mr. W. to make my scheme appear the more ridiculous, more than once represents it as my opinion, that in order to persons being admitted into the church, there must be a judgment of their being regenerate, founded on such a degree of evidence, as that it shall not be liable to be mistaken more than once in ten times. Thus, (p. 63. *c.*) "Mr Edwards himself supposes, in his own scheme, when he has made a positive judgment that every one singly whom he admits into the church is regenerate; yet, when taken collectively, it is probable one in ten will be an hypocrite?" (So, p. 71. *b.*) "If any thing be intended to the purpose for which this argument is brought, I conceive, it must be mean, that there must be a positive judgment of the real holiness of persons, as is not mistaken more than once in ten times."—Now, I desire the reader to observe what is the whole ground, on which he makes such a representation. In explaining my opinion, in the beginning of my inquiry, (p. 6.) I desire it might be observed, that I did not suppose we ought to expect any such degree of certainty of the godliness of those who are admitted into the church, as that when the whole number admitted are taken collectively, or considered in the gross,

admission of church members. And I am at some loss to understand what you mean by them, though I have heard the expression frequently, among people of your opinion, used to express some very ill thing. If you mean by positive evidences, infallible evidences of a thing that none but God infallibly knows, and can assure a man's own conscience of, with respect to a man himself; I think, it would be a very great evil for a man to require such evidence to found his judgment of charity, concerning another man's faith and holiness, or concerning his being an object of brotherly love. And I think, he is bound by the law of Christ to form his judgment in this matter upon less evidence. But if you mean positive evidence in opposition to negative, which is no evidence, I must own, I know not how to form a judgment of charity without some positive evidence. And is not a credible profession something positive?——Is not a credible profession of the faith, love, and hope that is in Christ, or of Christianity, a positive evidence, of a man's being an object of brotherly love, which evidence ought to be the ground of my judgment of charity concerning him, that he is a Christian, a Believer in Christ, a brother for whom Christ died? If it be otherwise, and if there be no evidence upon which I can charitably judge, that a man is a brother for whom Christ died, then tell me, how I can evidence my love to Jesus Christ, in the labour of love towards my brother, whom I have seen; and my love to God, in my love to them that are begotten of him?

we should have any reason to suppose every one to be truly godly; though we might have charity for each one that was admitted, taken singly and by himself. And to shew, that such a thing was possible, I endeavoured to illustrate it by a comparison, or supposed case of probability of ten to one, in the example of certain stones, with such probable marks of a diamond, as by experience had been found not to fail more than once in ten times. In which case, if a particular stone were found with those marks, there would be a probability of ten to one, with respect to that stone, singly taken, that it was genuine: but if ten such were taken together, there would not be the same probability that every one of them was so; but in this case it is as likely as not, that some one in the ten is spurious. Now it is so apparent, that this particular degree of probability of ten to one is mentioned only as a supposed case, for illustration, and because, in a particular example, some number or other must be mentioned, that it would have been an affront to the sense of my reader to have added any caution, that he should not understand me otherwise. However, Mr. W. has laid hold of this, as a good handle by which he might exhibit my scheme to the world in a ridiculous light; as though I had declared it my real opinion, that there must be the probability, of just ten to one, of true godliness, in order to persons' admission into the church. He might with as much appearance of sense and justice, have asserted concerning all the supposed cases in books of arithmetic, that the authors intend these cases should be understood as real facts, and that they have written their books, with all the sums and numbers in them, as books of history; and if any cases mentioned there only as examples of the several rules, are unlikely to be true accounts of fact, therefore have charged the authors with writing a false and absurd history.

IV. Another thing, yet further from what is honourable in Mr. W. is this; That, whereas I said as above, that there ought to be a prevailing opinion concerning those that are admitted, taken singly or by themselves, that they are truly godly or gracious, though when we look on the whole number in the gross, we are far from determining that every one is a true saint, and that not one of the judgments we have passed, has been mistaken; Mr. W. because I used the phrase singly taken, has laid hold on the expression, and from thence has taken occasion to insinuate to his readers, as if my scheme were so very extravagant, that according to this, when a great multitude are admitted, their admitters must be confident of EVERY ONE'S being regenerated. Hence he observes, (p. 98, *c.*) "There is no appearance, that John made a positive judgment that every one of these people were regenerated." Plainly using the expression as a very strong one; leading the reader to suppose,

that I insist the evidence shall be so clear, that when such a vast multitude as John baptized are viewed, the admitter should be peremptory in it, that his judgment has not failed so much as in a single instance; the very reverse of what I had expressed. In like manner, Mr. W. treats the matter from time to time. As in p. 55. *a.* "The thing to be proved from hence is, that the apostles and primitive Christians, not only thought that these persons were Christians, by reason of their external calling, and professed compliance with the call; but had formed a positive judgment concerning EVERY ONE OF THEM SINGLY, that they were real saints. Here the expression is plainly used as a very strong one: as implying much more than esteeming so great a multitude, when taken in the gross to be generally true saints, and with a manifest design to carry the same idea in the mind of the reader as was before-mentioned. See another like instance, p. 62. *c.*

V. However, my opinion is not represented bad enough yet; but to make it appear still worse, Mr. W. is bold to strain his representation of it to that height, as to suggest that what I insist on, is a certainty of others' regeneration; though this be so diverse from what I had largely explained in stating the question, and plainly expressed in other parts of my book,* and also inconsistent with his own representations in other places. For if what I insist on be a probability that may fail once in ten times, as he says it is, (p. 63, *a.*) then it is not a certainty that I insist on; as he suggests, p. 141 *a*—Speaking of the evil consequences of my opinion, he says, "The notion of men's being able and fit to determine positively the condition of other men, or the certainty of their gracious estate, has a direct tendency to deceive the souls of men." So again in p. 69. And he suggests that I require more than moral evidence, in p. 6. *c.* and p. 139. *d.*

VI. Mr. W. represents me as insisting on some way of judging the state of such as are admitted to communion, by their inward and spiritual experiences, diverse from judging by their profession and behaviour. So, p. 7. *b.* "If their outward profession and behaviour be the ground of this judgment, then it is not the inward experience of the heart." P. 55. *b.* "Which judgment must be founded on something beyond and beside their external calling, and visible profession to comply with it, and to be separated for God: and therefore this judgment must be

* In stating the question, (p. 5. *b.*) I explained the requisite visibility to be some outward manifestation, that ordinarily renders the thing probable. To the like purpose, is what I say in p. 10. *e.* and p. 11. *a. b. e.* and p. 12. *a. b. c.* And in p. 106. *e.* I say expressly "Not a certainty, but a profession and visibility of these things, must be the rule of the church's proceeding.

founded, either upon revelation, or a personal acquaintance with "their experiences," &c. In like manner he is abundant, from one end of his book to the other, in representing as though I insisted on judging men by their inward and spiritual experiences, in some peculiar manner. Which is something surprising, since there is not so much as a word said about relating, or giving an account of experiences, or what is commonly so called, as a term of communion. Mr. W. (p. 6. *a.*) pretends to quote two passages of mine, as an evidence, that this is what I insist on. One is from the 5th page of my book. It is true, I there say thus, "It is a visibility to the eye of the public charity, and not a private judgment, that gives a person a right to be received as a visible saint by the public." And I there say, "A public and serious profession of the great and main things wherein the essence of true religion or godliness consists, together with an honest character, an agreeable conversation, and good understanding of the doctrines of Christianity, and particularly those doctrines that teach the grand condition of salvation, and the nature of true saving religion; this justly recommends persons to the good opinion of the public; whatever suspicions and fears any particular person, either the minister, or some other, may entertain, from what he in particular has observed; perhaps the manner of his expressing himself in giving an account of his experiences, or an obscurity in the order and method of his experiences," &c.- But the words do not imply it may be demanded of the candidate, that he should give an account of his experiences to the minister, or any body else, as the term of his admission into the church: nor had I respect to any such thing. But I knew it was the manner in many places for those who hoped they were godly persons, to converse with their neighbours, and especially with their minister, about their experiences, whether it was required of them in order to their coming into the church, or no; and particularly, I was sensible, that this was the manner at Northampton, for whose sake especially I wrote: and I supposed it the way of many ministers, and people, to judge of others' state, openly and publicly, by the order and method of their experiences, or the manner of their relating them. But this I condemn in the very passage that Mr. W. quotes; and very much condemn, in other writings of mine which have been published; and have ever loudly condemned, and borne my testimony against.

There is one passage more, which Mr. W. adds to the preceding, and fathers on me, to prove that I require an account of experiences in order to admission; pretending to rehearse my words, with marks of quotation, saying as follows, (p. 6. *a.*) and as he further explains himself elsewhere; "The proper visibility which the public is to have of a man's being a saint, must be on some account of his experience of those doctrines which teach

the nature of true saving religion."—I have made long and diligent search for such a passage in my writings, but cannot find it. Mr. W. says, I thus explain myself elsewhere: but I wish he had mentioned in what place.

If there be such a sentence in some of my writings, (as I suppose there is not,) it will serve little to Mr. W.'s purpose. If we take the word experience according to the common acceptation of it in the English language, viz. a person's perceiving or knowing any thing by trial or experiment, or by immediate sensation or consciousness within himself; in this sense, I own, it may from what I say in my book be inferred, that a man's profession of his experience should be required as a term of communion. And so it may be as justly and as plainly inferred that Mr. W. himself insists on a profession of experience as a term of communion; experience of a deep conviction of a man's undone state without Christ; experience of a persuasion of his judgment and conscience, that there is no other way of salvation; experience of unfeigned desires to be brought to the terms of the covenant. For such things as these, he says, must be professed. So, p. 75. *d. e.* and in innumerable other places. There is no such thing possible as a man's professing any thing within himself or belonging to his own mind, either good or bad, either common or saving, unless it be something that he finds, or (which is the same thing) experiences, within himself.

I know the word experience is used by many in a sort of peculiar sense, for the particular order and method of what passes within the mind and heart in conversion. And in this sense, Mr. W. knows, I disclaim the notion of making experiences a term of communion. I say, he knows it, because (in p. 6. *a.*) he quotes and rehearses the very words wherein I do expressly disclaim it. And I am very large and particular in testifying against it in my book on Religious Affections: (a book I have good reasons to think Mr. W. has seen and read, having been thus informed by a man of his own principles, that had it from his mouth.) There, in p. 300. *e.* & 301. *a.* I say as follows:—"In order to persons making a proper profession of Christianity, such as the scripture directs to, and such as the followers of Christ should require, in order to the acceptance of the professors with full charity, as of their society, it is not necessary they should give an account of the particular steps and method, by which the Holy Spirit, sensibly to them, wrought, and brought about those great essential things of Christianity in their hearts. There is no footstep in the Scripture of any such way of the apostles, or primitive ministers and Christians, requiring any such relation in order to their receiving and treating others as their Christian brethren, to all intents and purposes: or of their first examining them concerning the particular method and order of their experiences.—They required of them a profession of the

things wrought; but no account of the manner of working was required of them. Nor is there the least shadow in the Scripture of any such custom in the Church of God, from Adam to the death of the apostle John." To the same purpose again I express myself in p. 302. *d.* And in the Preface to the book that Mr. W. writes against, I make particular mention of this book on Religious Affections, wherein these things are said; and there declare expressly, that when I wrote that book, I was of the same mind concerning the qualifications of communicants that I am of now.—But,

VII. To make my scheme still more obnoxious and odious, Mr. W. once and again insinuates, that I insist on an account of such inward FEELINGS, as are by men supposed to be the certain discriminating marks of grace, (so p. 7. *b.* and 141. *e.*) though I never once used the phrase any where in my book.—I said not a word about inward feelings, from one end of it to the other. Nor is any inward feeling at all more implied in my scheme, than in his. But however, Mr. W. knew that these phrases, experiences and inward feelings, were become odious of late to a great part of the country; and especially the latter of them, since Mr. Whitfield used it so much. And he well knew, that to tack these phrases to my scheme, and to suggest to his readers that these were the things I professed to insist on, would tend to render me and my scheme contemptible. If he says, Though I use not that phrase, yet the things I insist on, are such as are inwardly felt; such as saving repentance, faith, &c. I answer, these things are no more inward feelings, than the things he himself insists on; such as a deep conviction of a man's undone state, unfeigned fervent desires after Christ, a fixed resolution for Christ, engagedness for heaven, &c.

VIII. Mr. W. abundantly, in almost all parts of his book, represents my principles to be such as suppose men to be the SEARCHERS of others' hearts. For which I have given no other ground than only supposing that some such qualifications are necessary in order to communion, which have their seat in the heart, and so not to be intuitively seen by others; and that such qualifications must, by profession and practice, be made so visible or credible to others, that others may rationally judge they are there. And Mr. W. supposes the same thing as much as I. In p. 111. *c.* he expressly speaks of the qualifications necessary to communion, as being in the heart, and not possible to be known any other way than by their being seen there; and also often allows, that these qualifications must be exhibited, and made visible, by a credible profession, and answerable practice. Yea, he goes further, he even supposes that those who admit them to sacraments, ought to be satisfied by their profession, that they really have these qualifications. Thus he says, p. 54. *c.*

" The baptizer ought to be satisfied by a person's profession, that he really believes the Gospel, and that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the Saviour.

IX. Mr. W. is not contented with all these representations of my scheme, but will have it appear more absurd and monstrous still; and therefore represents me as maintaining that it is not the visible profession of experiences, that I suppose the ground of the church's judgment; but these experiences and inward feelings themselves, by having the heart turned inside out, and viewing them immediately in the heart itself, and judging upon the next and immediate actings of the heart. Here, I only desire the reader to read down Mr W.'s 7th page, and make his own reflections.

X. Whereas, in p. 16. of my book, I observed it to be the opinion of some, that, " Although the members of the visible church are saints in profession and visibility, and in the acceptance of others, yet this is not with reference to saving holiness, but to quite another sort of saintship, viz. moral sincerity; and that this is the real saintship, discipleship, and godliness, that is professed and visible in them," &c.: Mr. W. (p. 4, 5.) says, He does not remember that he ever heard of this, or that any body thought of it, before he saw it in my book; and represents it as a poor man of straw, of my own framing; and he insists upon it, that it is allowed on all hands, that the visibility must be with reference to saving holiness.

I will not say, that Mr. W. knew it to be a false representation which he here makes: But this I will say, that he ought to have been better informed, before he had thus publicly ridiculed this as a fiction of mine; especially considering the opportunities and advantages he has had to know otherwise: This being the notion that had been (as was before observed) so loudly and publicly insisted on, for more than two years, by the people of Northampton, and by the neighbouring ministers, and those of them that were Mr. W.'s near relatives; as he has had abundant opportunities to be fully informed, having withal had great inducements to inquire. Besides, that this has been the universal opinion of all that part of the country (who thought themselves Mr. Stoddard's followers,) for more than twenty years, is a fact as notorious, as that the people there generally believe Mr. Stoddard's doctrine of the necessity of a work of conversion in order to get to heaven.—And this is the opinion professedly maintained in a pamphlet published in Boston, (anno 1741,) intitled, " A Right to the Lord's Supper considered:" A piece which has long been well known among Mr. W.'s nearest relatives, and in good repute with them; as I have had occasion to observe. This pamphlet insists expressly and abundantly, that moral sincerity is the REAL discipleship and holiness, with respect to which

visible Christians are called disciples and saints, in scripture. Particularly see pages 9, 10, 13, and 14. And which is more strange yet, Mr. Blake, the great author Mr. W. makes so much use of, and in a book which I know he has long been the possessor of, speaks much of a profession of religion that has respect only to a dogmatical, historical faith, a common faith, a faith true indeed (as he says) in its kind, but short of that which is justifying and saving, and a profession which goes no further, as that which entitles to sealing ordinances. See Blake on the Covenant, p. 241, 244, 245. The same author again and again distinguishes between justifying faith and faith of profession; as in p. 284, 285, 286. And which is more than all this, Mr. W. (as will appear in the sequel) abundantly contends for the same thing himself, though against himself, and although he charges me (p. 35. *d.*)with a great misrepresentation, in supposing that according to the scheme of my opposers, the profession required in those that are admitted, does not imply a pretence to any thing more than moral sincerity and common grace.

PART II.

AN EXAMINATION OF MR. WILLIAMS'S SCHEME IN THE VARIOUS PARTS OF IT.

SECT. I.

Mr. W—'s Concessions.

Mr. W. allows, that, in order to a man's coming to sacraments, he ought solemnly to profess and declare, that he is really and heartily convinced of the divine truth of the gospel, (p. 30. *e.* p. 36. *a.* p. 32. *c.* p. 84. *a.*) That he does sincerely, and with all his heart believe the gospel,* (p. 49. *c.*) And that they which admit him, ought to be satisfied he really believes the gospel, that Jesus is the Son of God, the Saviour. (p. 54. *c.*) That he should profess and declare he believes in Christ, and that the gospel is indeed the revelation of God. (p. 5. *c.*) He allows, that none ought to be admitted, but such as openly profess and declare an hearty consent to the covenant of grace, and compliance with the call of the gospel, and submission to the proposals of it, and satisfaction with that device for our salvation that is revealed in the gospel, and with the offer which God makes of himself to be our God in Christ Jesus,† and that they fall in with the terms of salvation proposed in the gospel, and renounce all other ways. (p. 5. *c.* p. 8. *a.* p. 9. *b. c.* p. 11. *a.* p. 18. *e.* p. 55. *a.* p. 32. *c.*) He plainly supposes it not to be lawful for them that are lukewarm in religion, or those that serve two masters, to come to sacraments. (p. 32. *b.* p. 35. *d. e.* p. 36. *c.*) He supposes, that there must be a real determination of a man's judgment and affection for the word of God. (p. 55. *c.*) That there ought to be a profession of subjection to Christ with all the heart, (p. 10. *d.*)

* When I first proposed to a certain candidate for communion at Northampton, the publicly making this profession, viz. That he believed the truth of the gospel with all his heart, many of the people cried out, that I insisted on what no Saint on earth could profess, and that this amounted to a profession of absolute perfection. Hence many reports spread about the country, that I insisted on perfection as a term of communion.

† Mr. W. cites Mr. Guthrie (pref. p. 4. *c. e.*) as on his side, when he speaks of such a profession, as that which is to be made.

and of a devotedness to the service of God. (p. 49. *d.*) And a professed giving up themselves to Christ, to be taught, ruled, and led by him in the gospel-way to salvation; (p. 31. *c.* and 32. *a.*) And that communicants ought to declare, that they do, with all their hearts, cast themselves upon the mercy of God, to help them to keep covenant; (p. 125. *b.*) That they ought to profess a proper respect to Christ in their hearts, as well as a true notion of him in their heads; (p. 31. *d.*) That they must make a profession that imparts a pretence of real friendship to Christ, and love to God above the world. (p. 36. *c.*) That none ought to be admitted but visible Saints, and that this visibility must be such as to a judgment of rational charity makes them appear as real Saints wise virgins, and endowed with gospel holiness: (p. 5. *a. b.* p. 41. *e.* p. 42. *b.* p. 139. *a. d.* p. 14. *a.*) That there should be a charitable presumption, that the spirit of God has taken hold of them, and turned their hearts to God. (p. 52. *c.*) That they should be such persons as are in the eye of a Christian judgment truly gracious persons, supposed and believed in charity to be those to whom God has given saving repentance, and an heart-purifying faith; (p. 65. *c.* and p. 47. *b. c.*) Such as have the moral image of Christ appearing in them, or supposed to be in them, and are to be loved on that account. (p. 68. *c.*) He allows, that there ought to be some apprehension, some judgment of the mind, that they are Christians and Saints, and have the moral image of God in them.* (p. 68. *c. d. e.* p. 69. *a.* and 71. *d.*) He allows that they must be taken into the church under a notion of their being godly, and with respect to such a character appearing on them: And very often insists, that they themselves must make such a pretence. (p. 55. *c. d. e.*† p. 132. *a. c. d. e.* p. 136. *d.* p. 143. *c.*) So he allows, that they must not

* By this it appears, when Mr. W. speaks of the Church's rational judgment, that persons have real holiness, and the like, he does not mean merely treating them as such, in public administrations, and external conduct: For here he speaks not of the external conduct, but of the apprehension of the understanding, and judgment of the mind; and this as the foundation of the affection of the heart.

† Mr. W.'s words (p. 55. *d. e.*) are pretty remarkable: "The reader (says he) will judge, whether the manner of Mr. Edwards' treating the question, and representing the opinion of Mr. Stoddard and others, in the words I have quoted above, be not unaccountable; though this is neither the first nor the last time of his treating the matter in such a manner; As if Mr. Stoddard and his adherents supposed persons were to be admitted without any notion of their being godly, or any respect to such a character appearing on them, and that they themselves are without such a pretence."—Whereas, Mr. Stoddard expressly maintains, that men may be duly qualified, and fit matter for Church-membership, without saving grace. (Appeal p. 15, 16.) And that they may and ought to come, though they know themselves to be in a natural condition. (Doct. of instituted Churches, p, 21. See also his Sermon on the subject, p. 13.) And according to Mr. Stoddard, communicants are not so much as supposed godly persons. This (Appeal p. 43.) he says expressly, that by the institution communicants at the Lord's Supper are not supposed to be real Saints. And also asserts (Appeal, p. 76.) that we are not oblig-

only be endowed with Christian piety in appearance; but that they must be so in profession. (p. 3. *a.* p. 41. *e.* p. 44. *d.*) That they make a shew of being wise virgins by the nature and purport of their profession. (p. 42. *b.*) And he insists with strenuousness, over and over, upon its being their scheme, that they ought to make a profession of real saintship. (p. 132. *a. c. d.*) Yea, he holds, that there must be not only some visibility and profession of real piety, but moral evidence of it. (p. 139. *d.*) He often uses notes of distinction, distinguishing between moral sincerity, and real piety; and insists much upon it as belonging to their scheme; that there must be a visibility of the latter, as thus distinguished from the former. So, he rejects with great contempt any suggestion of its being the scheme of my opposers, that moral sincerity is that saintship, which is to be professed and made visible; and in distinction from this, he asserts, that it is real holiness. (p. 4. *d. e.* and p. 5. *a. b.*) And again, (p. 35 *c.*) he uses a note of distinction, and insists that the opposers of my opinion hold, that communicants must make a profession of something more than common grace and moral sincerity. And again, (p. 139. *a. d.*) he uses notes of discrimination, and says that they must exhibit a credible profession of gospel-holiness, and not merely of moral sincerity; and says it is not the visibility of moral sincerity, but the moral evidence of gospel-sincerity, which God's word makes the rule of judging,—And as he holds, that communicants must profess gospel-holiness, so he seems to suppose that these professors must judge this of themselves; several things, he says, seem plainly to imply it. This appears evidently implied in that interrogation put by Mr. W. (p. 35. *e.*) "Mr. S. rightly supposes all visible saints who are not truly pious, to be hypocrites; and the scripture supposes and calls

ed to believe visible Saints to be real Saints. And it seems by what he says in his Appeal, (p. 17.) the Church may admit persons to communion, when at the same time they are aware that they are hypocrites. For there, in answer to Dr. Mather, who had cited certain texts to prove, that when hypocrites do come into the Church, they come in unawares: he says, but neither of the places he cites proves that all hypocrites come in unawares. And in the next page, he says, The discovery of men's hypocrisy is not the reason of their being cast out. Still evidently on the same foundation, that some known hypocrites are fit to be admitted: for he says, (p. 15. *d.*) Such as being admitted may not be cast out, are fit to be admitted. And these things are agreeable to what I know Mr. Stoddard's church and congregation have universally supposed to be his constant doctrine and practice among them. Thus it was, without one dissenting voice among them, during the twenty-four years that I lived with them. And now the reader is desired to judge, as Mr. W. would have him, whether my representing it to be the opinion of Mr. S. and his adherents, that persons might be admitted into the Church without any notion of their being godly, or any respect to such a character appearing on them, be unaccountable.—By these things it is evident, Mr. S—d's scheme was far from being what Mr. W. represents it to be, and pretends to maintain as his. And if the question he had to controvert with me, were Mr. S—d's question, as he asserts; yet he greatly mistakes the true state of the question, though that be given as the title of his book.

them so too: But will it therefore follow that all hypocrites know they are so? And he in effect asserts, that men should look at such a qualification, as sanctifying grace, in themselves and inquire whether they have it, or no, in order to determine whether they should present themselves to gospel-ordinances: for he greatly finds fault with me for suggesting, as if those of a different opinion from me supposed, that persons have no manner of need to look at any such qualification in themselves, or at all inquire, whether they have it, in order to present themselves to sacraments. He refers to that passage in my book. (p. 55. *d.*) "I cannot conceive what should move Philip to utter those words, or what he should aim at in them, if he at the same time supposed that the eunuch had no manner of need to look at any such qualification in himself, or at all to inquire whether he had such a faith, or no, in order to determine whether he might present himself as the subject of baptism." It is plain, the qualification I have respect to, is grace, or saving faith. And so Mr. W. himself understands me; as appears by his reflections, (p. 49. *c. d. e.*) where, after quoting this passage, he consigns me over to another judgment, for suggesting that my opposers hold what I had there expressed, and for "representing the matter, as if they looked on it as no matter whether a person coming to gospel-ordinances had any grace, or no, and that he had no manner of need to inquire any thing about his sincerity."*

SECT. II.

Some plain consequences of the foregoing Concessions.

If it be as Mr. W. says, that the Church ought to admit none to their holy communion, in special ordinances, but visible saints, and that this visibility must be such as to a judgment of rational charity, makes them appear as real saints, and those that are admitted must be such as profess real saintship, gospel-holiness, in distinction from moral sincerity; then the whole of my first argument, from the nature of a visibility and profession of Christianity, is allowed by him, in both premises and consequences. And indeed Mr. W. does not only do thus con-

* Now let all that have been acquainted with the controversy between me and my people at Northampton, consider these things, which Mr. W. earnestly insists do belong to his scheme; and judge whether they be agreeable to the scheme which my opposers there have so vehemently and long contended for; yea, whether they are not very opposite to it; or whether in these things Mr. W. has not entirely yielded up, yea, vehemently asserted, the chief things concerning which they contested with me; and so, whether he has at all helped their cause by writing his book, or rather, on the contrary, has fought against them.

sequentially, but he is express in it. In (p. 4. c.) taking notice of this argument, he says, "The sense and force of it wholly lies in this compass; a visible saint is one that to the view, appearance and judgment of the Church is a real saint; and since none but visible saints are to be admitted by the church, therefore none are to be admitted but such as appear to the view and judgment of the church to be real saints." But these things, which Mr. W. himself allows as the sum of the argument, both premises and consequence, are expressly allowed by him in what there follows.

2. If there must be a visibility and profession of real piety, in distinction from moral sincerity, so that it can be truly said, as Mr. W. says with discretive terms, and notes of discrimination, that not merely the one must be professed, but the other; and that more than moral sincerity must be professed, &c.—Then it follows (or rather it is the same thing) that men must profess religion with some discrimination, or marks of difference in their words, distinguishing what is professed from moral sincerity; contrary to what Mr. W. strenuously and frequently asserts, (p. 6 *c. d.* & p. 9. *c.* and many other places.) For if the profession is made in words that signify no difference, then nothing different is signified or professed by those words; and so nothing more; contrary to what Mr. W. also asserts.

3. If it be as Mr. W. says, that the scripture has determined none ought to be admitted, but such as make an open profession and declaration of an hearty consent to the terms of the covenant of grace, such as covenant with God with their whole hearts, and profess gospel-holiness: Then the whole of my second argument, concerning explicit covenanting with God, is expressly allowed, in both premises and consequence; though Mr. W. seems at the same time, with so much labour and earnestness to militate against it. For the premises are that all ought openly and explicitly to own God's covenant, or consent to the terms of it. This is the same thing that he asserts, as above. And the consequence, or thing which I inferred from it, was, that all that are admitted ought to make a profession of real godliness: and this also he expressly and often allows.

4. Since it is supposed, that in order to admission, men ought to profess real friendship to Christ, and love to him above the world, and to profess a proper respect to Christ in their hearts, as well as true notion of him in their heads; and that they ought to profess gospel-holiness, and not merely moral sincerity: therefore the whole of what belongs to my third argument, is allowed, both premises and consequence. The premises were, that the nature of things affords as much reason for professing a proper respect to Christ in the heart, as a true notion of him in the head. This he allows. What I endea-

voured to infer from hence, was, that therefore men ought to profess true piety, and not only moral sincerity: and this is also allowed by him.

5. It appears, that the whole of my fourth argument, both premises and consequence, is allowed. The premises were, that the scripture reckons all visible saints who are not truly pious, to be hypocrites. This Mr. W. expressly allows, (p. 25. *e.*) The consequence I inferred, was, that visible saints are such as make a profession of true godliness, and not only moral sincerity. This also is very fully allowed by him, (p. 139. *a.*)

6. Since it is supposed, that when Christ's rules are attended, they that come to sacraments, do not know themselves to be hypocrites, but must look at such a qualification in themselves, as grace, and make such a pretence, and profess gospel holiness; therefore all is in effect allowed, that I endeavoured from the latter part of the 7th chapter of Matthew, which was to shew, that professing Christians in general, all those that said, Lord, Lord, both those that built on the sand, and those that built on a rock, were such as imagined themselves to have a saving interest in Christ, and pretended to be his real disciples, and made such a profession. The same was what I endeavoured to shew from the parable of the ten virgins. And therefore all that I argued from thence is in like manner allowed.

7. Hence, in vain is all the opposition Mr. W. makes to what I allege from the Acts of the Apostles, from the story of the Eunuch and other parts of that book, concerning the manner and circumstances of the admission of members into the primitive Christian church, and the profession they made; seeing he grants the main point I endeavoured to prove by it, viz. That they did make, and all adult persons that are admitted into the church, must make, a profession of something more than moral sincerity, even gospel-holiness.

8. Hence, in vain is all he says in opposition to my eighth argument, taken from the manner of the apostles' treating and addressing the primitive churches in their Epistles; since he does either expressly or virtually grant each of those three things, which he himself reckons up as the sum of what I intend under that argument, viz. (1.) That the apostles speak to the churches, and of them, as supposing and judging them to be gracious persons. (2.) That the members of these churches had such an opinion of themselves. (3.) That they had this judgment one of another. Mr. W. allows all these. He abundantly allows and asserts, that the members of churches are such as are supposed, and rationally judged to be gracious persons, by those that admit them; that they are taken in under that notion, and from respect to such a character appearing on them; and that they are rationally judged to be so by their fellow Chris-

tians; and that they must look at such a character in themselves, and must make such a pretence.

9. Since Mr. W. abundantly allows, that visible Christians must be believed in charity to be truly pious; and that they are such as have the moral image of Christ appearing in them, and supposed to be in them, and that they are to be loved on that account; therefore very impertinent and inconsistent is the opposition he makes to my ninth argument, from the nature of that brotherly love required towards all visible Christians; which was to shew, that visible Christians by the rule of Christ were to be apprehended to be true Christians.

10. In like manner, vain and to no purpose is the opposition he makes to my tenth argument, from the nature of sacramental actions, supposed in their intent and signification to be a solemn profession of those things wherein real piety consists, viz. a cordial acceptance of Christ and his benefits; from thence arguing, that a profession of these things is necessary, and so inferring, that those who perform these actions, should suppose themselves truly to accept of Christ: Since both these things are in effect granted, that communicants must judge that they have sanctifying grace, and also that they must profess gospel-holiness, a compliance with the call of the gospel, and falling in with the terms of salvation proposed, &c.

11. In vain also is the opposition he makes to my eleventh argument, from 1 Cor. xi. 28. "Let a man examine himself; and so let him eat."—Inferring from thence, that a man ought to inquire concerning such a qualification in himself, as grace, in order to know whether he may come to the sacrament of the Lord's supper. Since Mr. W. himself plainly supposes this very thing: That men ought to look at such a qualification in themselves, as grace, and to inquire whether they have it, in order to determine whether they may present themselves to Christian sacraments.

12. If it be true, according to Mr. W.'s representation of his own scheme, That persons may not be admitted to sacraments, but under a notion of their being truly godly, and with respect to such a character appearing on them; and that persons themselves had need to look at such a qualification in themselves, and inquire whether they have it, in order to determine whether they may come to sacraments; it must be because if they find they have it not, they may not come, or (which is the same thing) it is not lawful for them to come. For it would be ridiculous to say that others must look at such a qualification in them, and must not admit them but from respect to such a character on them; and that they themselves also must look at such a qualification in themselves, and inquire whether they have it, in order to determine whether they may come; when

yet they may come whether they have it or no, and have as much of a lawful right without it as with it. So that Mr. W. has in effect determined against himself the grand point, which he himself insists on, as the point in dispute, according to the true state of the question. And therefore,

13. It follows from the foregoing concessions, that Mr. W. is inconsistent with himself in all his arguings that men may come to sacraments without such a qualification or character as that of true piety. Because God has given no certain rule by which sacraments may be restrained to such,* or because that otherwise none might come but those that know they have such a character;† or because the contrary doctrine tends to bring saints into great perplexities in their attendance on sacraments;‡ or from the lawfulness of unregenerate men's attending other duties.§ If there be any force in this arguing from other duties to an attendance on sacraments, then the argument will infer that men must not be admitted to other duties, but under the notion of their being truly godly, and from respect to such a character appearing on them, &c.—as Mr. W. insists with regard to Christian sacraments. And so if these things which Mr. W. concedes and asserts, are true, in vain is all arguing from the like tendency in sacraments to convert men, as in other duties:‖ And in vain is it to argue the lawfulness of men's coming without this character, from their obligation to perform external covenant-duties,¶ and to carry themselves like saints.** And in vain is all arguing from the pretended bad consequences of the contrary doctrine.††

14. The opposition Mr. W. makes to my argument from Isaiah lvi. especially those words, ver. 6, 7. The sons of the stranger that join themselves to the Lord, to love the Lord, and be his servants—will I bring into my holy mountain—to prove that none have a right in the sight of God to the privileges of the Christian church, but those that love God, and are truly pious; I say, the opposition Mr. W. makes to this argument is frivolous, since he in effect grants the same thing, (as above,) yea, expressly allows, that they must make pretences of being God's real friends, and loving God more than the world, p. 36. *c.*

15. If it be true, as Mr. W. allows and abundantly asserts, that in order to persons being admitted to holy communion in special ordinances, the scripture has determined, that there must be an open profession and declaration of a person's believing, or of a personal believing in Christ, (which is the same thing,) and of an hearty consent to the terms of the covenant of grace,‡‡ and that therein must be a profession of gospel-holi-

* See Mr. W.'s Book, p. 106, &c. † Ibid. p. 108, &c. ‡ P. 120, &c.
§ P. 123, &c. ‖ P. 126, &c. ¶ P. 128, &c. ** P. 131. †† P. 131, &c.
‡‡ See how Mr. W. expresses himself, p. 5, *b. c.*

ness: then nothing to the contrary avails that great argument of his, taken from the state of baptized infants, that they are already in the Church, and in covenant, and are members in complete standing, &c.; and that therefore no owning the covenant or professing godliness can be demanded of them:* And in vain is all that he has said to prove this in his discourse on the wheat and tares.†

16. To what purpose is it, to object from the parable now mentioned, that the church ought not to make a distinction between wheat and tares, in their admission of members, by pretending to discern the difference? when it is so apparent, that there is no pretence to any proper discerning in the case, nor any other distinction pleaded, than what is made by a judgment of charity. According to Mr. W.'s own scheme, churches are obliged to make a distinction, in the rational judgment they pass, and to admit none, but what they judge to be true Saints; so that those who are wheat, in the eye of their judgment, only are to be admitted, and such as are tares, in the eye of their judgment, are to be excluded.

17. What is said by Mr. W. of the visible church being the school of Christ, and men being admitted into it as disciples or scholars, some of them in order to attain grace, (p. 81, and 83.) is nothing to the purpose, if it be as Mr. W. allows and asserts, that in order to be admitted into this school, they must be supposed, in a reasonable judgment, to have this attainment already, and make a pretence to it, and a solemn profession of it, and must give moral evidence that they have it, and must be admitted into the school under no other notion than that of their being already possessed of it.

18. If it be as Mr. W. expressly says, That persons are not visible Saints without a credible profession, visibility and moral evidence, not only of moral sincerity, but true holiness, (p. 139.) then all is wholly insignificant and vain, that is said to prove that the children of Israel were visible Saints without any evidence of such holiness, by reason of the idolatry and gross and open wickedness of vast multitudes of them, who are yet called God's people. And so likewise, all that is said to prove, that the members of the primitive Christian church had no other visibility of saintship than they, because they are grafted into the same olive; and also all that Mr. W. has said to prove, that many of the members of the primitive churches were as grossly wicked as they.

19. Since according to Mr. W. the terms of admission to the Jewish ordinances, were the same as to Christian ordinances, the like profession and the same visibility of saintship required, and no other; as he strenuously asserts, (p. 57. *e.* p. 61.

* See especially p. 3. † P. 99, 100.

e. and p. 65. *c.*) it will therefore follow from his foregoing concessions and assertions, that none were, by God's appointment, to come to the passover, and to have their children circumcised, but such as openly professed and declared that they were convinced of the truth of God's word, and believed it with all their hearts; and professed a hearty consent to the terms of the covenant of grace: such as covenanted with God with their whole hearts, and gave up all their hearts and lives to Christ; such as subjected themselves to Christ with their whole hearts, and gave up themselves to him to be ruled, taught and led by him; such as with all their hearts cast themselves on the mercy of God to enable them to keep covenant: such as professed to love God above the world, and professed more than common faith and moral sincerity, even true holiness, real piety; and who gave moral evidence, that they had such a qualification; and were received to the passover, &c. under that notion, and with respect to such a character appearing in them, and apprehended to be in them. And if these things are so, what is become of the argument from the passover and circumcision, against the necessity of the qualifications I have insisted on!

20. To what purpose does Mr. W. insist (p. 98. *a.*) That we read not a word in scripture about John the Baptist's making any inquiry, whether the people he baptized made a credible profession of true piety? when he himself insists, that in order to admission to Christian sacraments, men must make a credible profession of true piety. And why does he urge (p. 96. *e.* and p. 97.) That the profession the people made which John baptized, did not imply that they had saving repentance, but only an engagement to repent, hereafter? when he himself holds, that in order to admission to sacraments, men must profess something more than common grace, and only promise it hereafter.

21. It makes nothing to any point in controversy between Mr. W. and me, whether Judas partook of the Lord's supper or no, since according to the fore-mentioned principles, as well as mine, he could not be admitted there under any other notion than that of being truly pious, and from respect to such a character appearing on him, and a credible profession of gospel-holiness; and since he might not lawfully come without some qualifications he had not, viz. such a friendship for Christ, as is above lukewarmness, and above serving two masters, Christ and Mammon, and a giving up all his heart and life to Christ, and a real determination of his judgment and affections for Christ's word, &c.

22. If it be true, as Mr. W. allows, that ministers and churches ought not to admit adult persons to sacraments, without a pious character appearing on them, and their professing and exhibiting moral evidence of gospel-holiness, then no

good argument can be brought against such a way of admission, from the success of ministers in another way, or in any way whatsoever.

Besides these plain and obvious consequences of Mr. W.'s concessions, some other consequences will hereafter be observed under particular heads.

Thus Mr. W. has in effect given up every point belonging to the whole controversy, every thing material insisted on through that whole book which he undertakes to answer. He has established every part of my scheme, and every particular argument I have used to confirm it; and answered or overthrown every argument which he brings, or pretends to support against it. And I should have no further occasion to say any thing in reply to him, if he had not really, through great part of his performance, argued for other things, opposite to those that have been rehearsed, which he so strenuously insists belong to his scheme. That arguing may seem to support another scheme, though nothing akin to his, any otherwise than as it is indeed a mixture of many schemes, one clashing with and destroying another; as will appear in the ensuing part of this reply.

SECT. III.

The inconsistence of the fore-mentioned concessions with the lawfulness of unsanctified persons coming to the Lord's Supper, and their rights to Sacraments in the sight of God.

Mr. W. in the book under consideration, which he entitles the true State of the Question, insists upon it that the question to be debated is the question Mr. Stoddard debated in his dispute with Dr. Mather; in whose scheme Mr. W. declares himself to be. Mr. S. in his dispute with Dr. Mather asserted, that it was lawful for some unsanctified men to come to the Lord's supper, and that they had a right so to do in the sight of God. And he declares that this was the point in dispute between him and Dr. Mather; as in Appeal, p. 20. "That which I am to shew is, that some unsanctified men have a right before God to the Lord's supper." So Mr. Blake (who is so great an author with Mr. W.) says in his treatise on the covenant, p. 244. "That faith which is the condition of the promise, is not the condition in foro Dei, [before God] of a title to the seal." And there (in the next p.) he insists, that it is a common faith, that is believed by men not justified, which gives this title. Agreeable to these things Mr. W. says, (p. 132. *d.*) some men have a lawful right to the sacrament without sanctification. Which is the same thing as to say, They have a right in the sight of God. For if

they have no right in the sight of God to come to the Lord's supper, then it is not lawful in the sight of God that they should come.

Here I would lay down this as a maxim;

There is some inward religion and virtue or other, some sincerity of heart, either moral or saving, that is necessary to a right to sacraments in the sight of God, and in order to a lawful coming to them. No man, I trust, will say, that a man has a right in God's sight, who has no sort of seriousness of mind; and that merely outward sounds and motions give him this right in God's sight, without regard to any property or quality of mind, and though this outward shew is joined with the most horrid and resolved secret irreligion and wickedness. Mr. W. in particular utterly disclaims such doctrine as this, and always maintains that in order to men's lawful coming, they must be morally sincere; as in his Preface, and also in p. 25. *d. e.* p. 27. *c.* p. 30. *d.* p. 35. *e.* p. 111.—In p. 115. he supposes, that if a man makes a doubt of his moral sincerity, no divine will advise him to come till he knows.

Having observed this, I now desire it may be considered, whether it be reasonable to suppose, as Mr. W. does, that God would give men that are without grace, a lawful right to sacraments, so that this qualification itself should be nothing necessary to a proper and rightful claim to these ordinances; and that yet he would wholly forbid them to come, and others to admit them, without their making some pretence to it, and exhibiting moral evidence that they have it: That moral sincerity is the qualification which by God's own appointment invests persons with a lawful right to sacraments, and that by his institution nothing more is requisite to a lawful right; and yet that he hath commanded them not to come, nor others to allow them to come, without making a profession of something more than moral sincerity, as Mr. W. says. Mr. W. supposes that God requires us, before we admit persons, to seek credible evidence of true piety, and to see to it that we have reasonable ground to believe they have it; otherwise, not to allow them to come: and yet that God does not look on such a qualification requisite in itself, when all is done, and that he has given them as true and lawful a right to come without it, as with it. If God insists upon it, as Mr. W. supposes, that members should be admitted under no other notion than of their being truly godly, and from respect to such a character appearing on them, is it not plain, that God looks on such a character in itself requisite, in order to a person's being a rightful subject of such a privilege? If the want of this qualification do not in the least hinder a person's lawful right to a thing, on what account can the want

of an appearance of it and pretence to it, warrant and oblige others to hinder his taking possession of that thing?

That we should be obliged to require a credible pretence and evidence of the being of a thing, in order to a certain purpose, the being of which is not requisite to that purpose; or that some evidence of a thing should be necessary, and yet withal no necessity there should be any foundation of such evidence, in the being of the thing to be made evident; That it should be necessary for us to seek evidence that something is true, and yet there be no need in order to the intended purpose, that there be any such truth to be made evident;—If these things are the dictates of common sense, I am willing all that are possessed of any degree of common sense should be judges.

If God has plainly revealed, that gospel-holiness is not necessary in itself in order to men's lawful right to sacraments, as Mr. W. greatly insists, then his churches need not believe it to be necessary; yea, it is their duty to believe that it is not necessary, as it is their duty to believe what God says to be true. But yet Mr. W. holds, that God forbids his churches to admit any to sacraments, unless they first have some rational evidence obliging them to believe that they have gospel-holiness. Now how palpable is the inconsistence, that we must be obliged to believe men have a qualification in order to our suffering them to come, which yet at the same time we need not believe to be necessary for them to have in order to their coming, but which God requires us to believe to be unnecessary? Or in other words, that God has made it necessary for us to believe or suppose men are truly pious, in order to our lawfully allowing them to take the sacraments, and yet at the same time requires us to believe no such thing as their being pious is necessary in order to their lawfully taking the sacraments?

Mr. Stoddard (whose principles Mr. W. in preface, p. 3. *a.* declares himself to be fully established in,) not only says, that some unsanctified men have a right before God to the Lord's supper, but strongly asserts, over and over, that they are FIT to be admitted to the Lord's supper, that they are DULY QUALIFIED, FIT MATTER for church-membership.—(Appeal, p. 15, 16.) And Mr W. argues that such qualifications as some unsanctified men have, are SUFFICIENT to bring them into the church. Now if it be so, what business have we to demand evidence or a pretence of any thing further? What case in the world can be mentioned parallel to it, in any nation or age? Are there any such kind of laws or regulations to be found in any nation, city, or family: in any society, civil, military, or academic, stated or occasional, that the society should be required to insist on some credible pretence and evidence of a

certain qualification, in order to persons being admitted to the privileges of the society; prohibiting their being admitted under any other notion than as persons possessed of that qualification, or without a respect in their admission to such a character appearing on them; and yet at the same time by the laws of that very society, that qualification is not necessary; but persons are declared, without any such qualification, to have a lawful right, to be fit matter, to be duly qualified, and to have sufficient qualifications to be admitted to these privileges without that qualification?

If some men have a right in the sight of God to sacraments, without true piety, and are fit, and duly qualified without it, in his sight and by his institution, and yet the church must not admit them unless they are truly pious in their sight; then the eye of man must require higher terms, than the infinitely holy eye of God himself; they must look for something that the eye of God looks not for, and which he judges them duly qualified without.

Mr. W. when speaking of the evidence on which he supposes the church ought to judge persons to be real saints, from time to time adds, that on such evidence "The church is obliged, in their external carriage, to treat them as saints, and admit them to the external privileges of the church."—So, p. 9. *d.* p. 12. *a.* &c. p. 13. *a. b.* and p. 14. *c.* and in other places. But what does he mean by treating them as saints, in admitting them to the external privileges of the church? If sinners have as much of a lawful right to these privileges, as saints, then why is giving them these privileges a treating them as saints, any more than as sinners? If it belongs to an ignorant child, to be admitted into school, as much as one that is learned, then how is it treating him as one that is learned, to admit him? Mr. W. (p. 11. *d. e.*) giving a reason why he that professes conviction of the truth of the gospel, &c. ought to be admitted to sacraments, says, "Though this conviction may be only by moral evidence and common illumination, yet—the church know not but it is done on a divine and gracious discovery." But how can this be a reason? What if the church did know that it was not on a gracious discovery, if the man has a right in the sight of God without, and God has made it his duty to come to sacraments without it? Surely the church have no right to forbid him to do that which God has given him a right to do, and made it his duty to do, as Mr. S. says, (Doct. of Inst. Churches, p. 20. *b.*) The church may not hinder any man from doing his duty.

Therefore if this be Mr. S——d's question, Whether some unsanctified men may lawfully come to the Lord's Supper, and if this be the grand point in dispute, the thing which Mr. W.

undertakes to maintain, as he often declares, then it is most plainly evident, that in conceding and asserting those things forementioned, he does in effect abundantly give up that which he himself insists on as the grand point in controversy; and so makes void and vain all his own labour, and for himself effectually confutes all that he has written.

SECT. IV.

Concerning Mr. W.'s notion of a public Profession of Godliness in terms of an indeterminate and double Signification.

According to Mr. W. the profession of godliness must be in words not of a determinate meaning, or without any discrimination in the meaning of the words, obliging us to understand them of saving religion. (p. 6. *c. d.*) They must make an open declaration of their sincere consent to the terms of the covenant, without any discrimination, by which it can be determined, that the consent signified by the words is a gracious consent. (p. 9. *c.*) And without any marks of difference, or any distinction in the words, whereby we can be enabled to judge when they mean a saving faith, and when a different one. (p. 10. *c. e.* p. 50. *e.* and 53. *c.*) That nothing should be expressed in the words of the profession, but what some unsanctified men may say, and speak true. (p. 47. *e.*) He supposes, that the primitive Christians in the profession they made of faith, did not speak only in that sense, viz. so as to signify justifying faith; and that the persons admitted did not understand that their profession was understood by those that admitted them, only in that sense. (p. 58. *c.*)

Agreeable to this notion of making a profession in words of indiscriminate meaning, and professing godliness without godliness, and yet speaking true, Mr. W. (in p. 44. *d. e.*) allows, that men must be by profession godly persons, in order to come to the sacrament; and yet in the next sentence he denies, that Christian grace itself is requisite in the person who is to come to the sacrament, or that the dictate of his conscience that he has it, is the thing that gives him a right to offer himself. And agreeable to this last clause, Mr. Stoddard (of whose opinion Mr. W. professes himself fully to be,) expressly maintains, that a man may and ought to come to the Lord's supper, though he knows himself to be in a natural condition. (Doct. of Inst. Churches, p. 21. See also his sermon on this controversy, p. 13.) So that putting these things together, it must be agreeable to Mr. W.'s scheme, that a man has a right to make a profession of godliness, without having godliness, and without any dictate of his con-

science that he has the thing he professes, yea, though he knows he has it not! And all this is made out by the doctrine of professing godliness in words that are ambiguous, and of two meanings.

This notion of a solemn profession of godliness in words of a double meaning, without any marks of difference in their signification, is the great peculiarity of Mr. W.'s scheme; and in all his controversy with me, this appears to be the main hinge, the crisis of the whole affair. Therefore I would particularly consider it. And for the greater distinctness and clearness, I will lay down certain positions, as of most evident truth; observing some of their no less plain and evident consequences.

1. Words declare or profess nothing any otherwise than by their signification: For to declare or profess something by words, is to signify something by words. And therefore, if nothing is signified by words of a pretended profession, nothing is really professed; and if something be professed no more is professed than the words of the profession signify or import.

2. If a man declare or profess any particular thing by words which have no distinguishing signification, or without any signs or discriminating marks by which men may be enabled to distinguish what he means, his words are vain to the pretended purpose, and wholly fail of answering the end of words, which is to convey the thing meant to others' understanding, or to give notice to others of the thing supposed or understood.*

Therefore to use words thus in common conversation, is to act in a vain trifling manner, more like children than men: But to use words thus in the sacred services of God's house, and solemn duties of his worship, is something much worse than children's play. But thus Mr. W. expressly declares, words are to be used in a public profession of religion, (p. 10. *c.*) "And these words are so used in such cases, without any marks of difference, whereby we are enabled to judge when they mean a saving faith, and when a different one."

3. A profession made in words that are either equivocal or general, equally signifying several distinct things, without any marks of difference or distinction, by which we are enabled to judge which is meant, is not a profession or signification of any

* The apostle Paul says, 1 Cor. xiv. 7. "Even things without life, giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped?——Mr Locke says, Hum. Und. Vol. 2. Edit. 7. p. 103. "He that uses words of any language without DISTINCT ideas in his mind, to which he applies them, does so far as he uses them in discourse, only make a noise without any sense or signification."

one of those several things; nor can they afford any rational ground of understanding or apprehending any particular thing. Thus for instance, if a man using an equivocal term, should say, that such an evening a king was in that room, without any marks of difference or discrimination whatsoever, by which others could discern whether by a king, he meant the ruler of a kingdom, or a king used in a game of chess; the words thus used would be no declaration, that the head of a kingdom was there at such a time; nor would they give any notice of any such thing to those to whom he spoke, or give them any rational ground to understand or judge any such thing.

Or if a man should use a general term, comprehending various particular sorts, without at all distinguishing or pointing forth any one particular sort, he thereby professes no one particular sort. Thus if a man professes that he has metal in his pocket, not saying what sort of metal, whether gold, silver, brass, iron, lead, or tin; his words are no profession that he has gold.

So if a man professes sincerity or religion designedly using terms of double signification, or (which comes to the same thing) of general signification, equally signifying two entirely distinct things, either moral sincerity, or real piety, his words are no profession of real piety; he makes no credible profession, and indeed no profession at all of gospel-holiness.

4. If a man who knows himself to be destitute of any certain qualification, yet makes a profession or pretence, in words of double meaning, equally signifying that qualification, and something else very different, with a design to recommend himself to others' judgment and apprehension, as possessed of that qualification, he is guilty of deceitful equivocation, viz. using words of double meaning, or capable of double application, with a design to induce others to judge something to be true, which is not true. But he that would recommend himself by such terms to others' opinion or judgment, as being what he at the same time knows he is not, endeavours to induce them to believe what he knows is not true, which is to deceive them.*

But if the scheme which Mr. W. undertakes to defend were true, it would follow that such a kind of equivocation as this, (be it far from us to suppose it,) is what the infinitely wise and holy God has instituted to be publicly used in the solemn services of his house, as the very condition of persons' admission to the external privileges of his people! For Mr. W. abundantly asserts, that persons must be esteemed in the judgment and appre-

* "To advance a dubious proposition, knowing it will be understood in a sense different from what you give it in your mind, is an equivocation, in breach of good faith and sincerity."—Chambers's Dictionary, under the word Equivocation.

hension of others to have true piety; and that one thing that must be done in order to it, one thing pertaining to the moral evidence that recommends them to this judgment, is the profession they make of religion, (p. 5. p. 139. p. 47. *b. c.* p. 132. p. 44. *d.*) In p. 42, speaking of the profession of visible Christians, he has these words, "And it is from the nature and purport of this profession, we say, the church is to judge the members to be wise virgins, or what they make a shew of." And Mr. W. insists upon it, that according to Christ's institution, this must be in words equally signifying true godliness, and something else, without any discrimination or marks of difference.—This is the scheme! And certainly such a doctrine of deceitful equivocation in the public exercise of religion, is more agreeable to the principles and practices of a religion I am loth to name, than the true religion of Jesus Christ.

Mr. W. says, (p. 35. *d.*) "I am at a loss to conceive how it will help the cause of truth to represent those who are of Mr. S.'s opinion, as teaching men that they may enter into covenant with God with known and allowed guile." Supposing I had made such a representation, I can tell him how it would have helped the cause of truth, (as it would be speaking nothing but the truth,) if he be one of Mr. Stoddard's opinion, (as he says he is,) and represents his own opinion truly.

But let the unreasonableness of this notion of professing gospel holiness in words of two meanings, without any discrimination or mark of difference, be a little further considered.—Since it is allowed, that gospel holiness is the thing which is to be exhibited in the profession, and there are words which signify this by a determinate meaning, why must they needs be avoided, and words of doubtful and double signification only be made use of?* Since the design of the profession is to exhibit to others' understanding that very thing; if the proper and distinguishing names of that must nevertheless be avoided in the profession, and for this very reason, that they point forth to others' understanding that very thing by a determinate meaning; then we are brought to this gross absurdity, viz. That the end of a profession is to exhibit to others' understanding and reasonable judgment a particular qualification; but at the same time such words only must be used as do not distinctly point forth to others' understanding and judgment that particular qualification. The church are to seek and demand a profession, that shall determine their rational judgment; but yet are designedly to avoid such a profession, as shall determine their understandings.—Be it far from

* Mr. W. (p. 6. *d. e.*) speaks of a profession in terms of indiscriminate signification, when not contradicted in life, as the sole, entire evidence, which the church, as a church, is to have, by divine appointment, in order to that public judgment it is to make of the saintship of men.

us to attribute to the allwise God any such an absurd and inconsistent constitution.

Mr. W. says, charity obliges the church to understand the words of the professors in the most favourable sense. But charity does not oblige us to understand their words in any other sense than that in which they professedly use them. But in churches which professedly act on Mr. W.'s scheme, (if any such there be,) the professors who are admitted, professedly use ambiguous words, or words equally signifying two entirely distinct things, without discrimination or marks of difference; and therefore charity obliges us to understand their words no otherwise than as signifying that they have one or other of those two things; and not that they have one in particular: for their words do not signify this, in the sense they professedly use them. If a man that is indebted to me, professes that he has either gold or brass, which he promises to pay me; or if he uses an equivocal or general term, that equally, and without marks of difference, signifies either one or the other; charity may oblige me to believe what he says, which is, that he has either gold or brass: but no charity obliges me to believe that he has gold, which he does not say.

Mr. W. in his description of such a profession as Christ has instituted, in order to admission to Sacraments, often mentions two things, viz. A profession of something present, a present believing in Christ, and cordial consent to the terms of the covenant of grace, &c. And a promise of something future. And with regard to the latter, he is very full in it, that what is promised for time to come is saving faith, repentance, and obedience.* Now what reason can be given why we should use words of double meaning in the former part of the profession more than in the latter? Seeing Mr. W. allows that we must profess gospel-holiness as well as promise it, and seeing we may and must make use of words of indiscriminate and double meaning in professing present gospel-holiness, why should not we do so too in promising what is future; and so equivocate in our solemn vows and oaths as the Papists do? If Mr. W. says it is very hard for men to discern the discrimination between moral sincerity and gospel-holiness; I answer, there is as much need to discern the difference in order understandingly to promise gospel-holiness with discrimination, as to profess it with discrimination.

Mr. W. says (p. 8. *b. c.*) "It is a received rule among mankind, in all public judgments, to interpret words in the most extensive and favourable sense, that the nature of the words or expressions will bear." I know not what he means: But if he means (as he must, if he means any thing to the purpose) that it

* Prof. p. 3. *d. e.* & 5. *d.* p. 21. *b.* 25. *b.* 22. *d.* 27. *a.* 58. *d.* 69. *d.*

is a received rule among mankind, to trust, or accept, or at all regard any professions or declarations that men make, with professed design, in words of double and indiscriminate meaning, without any marks of difference by which their meaning can be known, for that very end that they may be used with a safe conscience, though they have no dictates of their own consciences, that they have what others are to believe they have; I say, if this be a received rule among mankind, it is a rule that mankind has lately received from Mr. W. Heretofore mankind, societies or particular persons, would have been counted very foolish for regarding such professions. Is this the way in earthly kingdoms, in professions of allegiance to temporal princes, in order to their admission to the privileges of good subjects? Do they choose equivocal terms to put into their oaths of allegiance, to that end that men may use them and speak true, though they are secret enemies?—There are two competitors for the kingdom of this world, Christ and Satan the design of a public profession of religion is, to declare on which side men are. And is it agreeable to the custom of mankind in such cases, to make laws that no other than ambiguous words shall be used, or to accept of such in declarations of this kind? There are two competitors for the kingdom of Great Britain, King George, and the Pretender; Is it the constitution of King George and the British Parliament, that men should take oaths of allegiance, contrived in words of indeterminate signification, to the end that men who are in their hearts enemies to King George, and friends to the Pretender, may use them and speak true? And certainly mankind, those of them that have common sense, never in any affairs of life look on such professions as worth a rush. Would Mr. W. himself, if tried, in any affair wherein his temporal interest is concerned, trust such professions as these? If any man with whom he has dealings, should profess to him that he had pawned for him, in a certain place, a hundred pounds, evidently, yea professedly using the expression as an ambiguous one, so that there is no understanding by it, what is pawned there, whether a hundred pound in money, or a hundred weight of stones: If he should inquire of the man what he meant, and he should reply, you have no business to search my heart, or to turn my heart inside out; you are obliged in charity to understand my words in the most favourable sense: would Mr. W. in this case stick to his own received rule? would he regard such a profession, or run the venture of one sixpence upon it? Would he not rather look on such a man as affronting him, and treating him as though he would make a fool of him? And would not he know, that every body else would think him a fool, if he should suffer himself to be gulled by such professions, in things which concern his own private interest?—And yet it seems, this is the

way in which he thinks he ought to conduct himself as a minister of Christ, and one intrusted by him in affairs wherein his honour and the interests of his kingdom are concerned.

And now I desire it may be judged by such as are possessed of human understanding, and are not disabled by prejudice from exercising it, whether this notion of Mr. W.'s of making a solemn profession of gospel-holiness in words of indiscriminate meaning, be not too absurd to be received by the reason God has given mankind. This peculiar notion of his is apparently the life and soul of his scheme; the main pillar of his temple, on which the whole weight of the building rests; which if it be broken, the whole falls to the ground, and buries the builder, or at least his work, in its ruins. For if this notion of his be disproved, then, in as much as it is agreed, that true godliness must be professed, it will follow, that it must be professed in words properly signifying the thing by a determinate meaning, which therefore no ungodly men can use, and speak true; and that therefore men must have true godliness in order to a right in the sight of God to make such profession, and to receive the privileges depending thereon: which implies and infers all those principles of mine which Mr. W. opposes in his book, and confutes all that he says in opposition to them.

SECT. V.

Shewing that Mr. Williams, in supposing that unsanctified men may profess such things, as he allows must be professed, and yet speak true, is inconsistent with Mr. Stoddard, and with himself

Mr. W. denies that in order to men being admitted to sacraments, they need make any peculiar profession, distinguished from what an unregenerate man may make, (p. 44. *c.* p. 50. *e.* 6. *c. d. e.* 9. *c.* 10. *c. e.* 45. *e.* 46. *a.* & 53. *e.*) or that they need to profess any thing but what an unregenerate man may say, and speak true, (p. 47. *c.*) And that they need make no profession but what is compatible with an unregenerate state, (p. 8. *d. e.*) And yet the reader has seen what things he says all must profess in order to come to sacraments. One thing he says they must profess, is a real conviction of the heart, of the divine truth of God's word; that they do sincerely and with all their hearts believe the gospel. And these things, he says, are agreeable to the opinion of Mr. Stoddard, and the doctrine he taught, (p. 32. *b. c.* & p. 36. *a.*) Let us compare these things with the doctrine Mr. S. taught Mr. S. taught, that natural men do not believe the gospel, (Benef. of the Gosp. p. 89. *b.*) that they do not properly believe the word

of God. (Guide to Christ, p, 26. *d.*) That they do not believe the testimony of God, do not lay weight on the word of God; that they do not believe the report of the gospel. (Safety of Ap. Edit. 2. p. 229. *c. e.*) That they do not receive God's testimony, nor lay weight on it. (Ibid. p. 99.) That there is no man, how great soever his profession, how large soever his knowledge, that continues in a natural condition, who thoroughly believes that truth; i. e. that men may be saved by Christ's righteousness. (Ibid. p. 4. *d.* & p. 5. *d. e.*) That common illumination does not convince men of the truth of the gospel. (Benef. of the Gosp. p. 148, 149.) How then could it be the doctrine Mr. S. taught, that natural men may really and with all their hearts believe and be convinced of the truth of the gospel?

And Mr. W. himself, in his sermons on Christ a King and Witness, (p. 114, 115.) says, "man since the fall is naturally ignorant of divine truth, and an enemy to it, and full of prejudices against the truth:" and further, (Ibid. p. 114.) "The renewing of the Holy Ghost makes an universal change of the heart and life.——He knows the doctrine contained in the Bible in a new manner.—Before he had a view of the truth as a doubtful uncertain thing; he received it as a thing which was probably true; —and perhaps for the most part it appeared something likely to answer the end proposed. But now the gospel appears to him divinely true and real," &c. But how do these things consist with men being, before conversion, sincerely and with all their hearts convinced of the divine truth of the gospel? Can that be, and yet men view it as a doubtful uncertain thing, as not yet appearing to them divinely true and real?

Again, Mr. W. supposes, that some unsanctified men may speak true, and profess a hearty consent to the terms of the covenant of grace, a compliance with the call of the gospel, submission to the proposals of it, satisfaction with that device for our salvation that is revealed in the gospel, and with the offer which God makes of himself to be our God in Christ Jesus, a fervent desire of Christ and the benefits of the covenant of grace, and an earnest purpose and resolution to seek salvation on the terms of it, (p. 11. *c.*) and a falling in with the terms of salvation proposed in the gospel, with a renouncing of all other ways, (which he speaks of as agreeable to Mr. Stoddard's opinion, p. 32. *b. c.*) Quite contrary to the current doctrine of Calvinistic Divines; contrary to the opinion of Mr. Guthrie, whom he cites as a witness in his favour, (pref. p. 4.) who insists on satisfaction with that device for our salvation which is revealed in the gospel, and with the offer which God makes of himself to be our God in Christ, as the peculiar nature of saving faith. And contrary to the principles of Mr. Perkins (another author he quotes as his voucher) delivered in these very words, which Mr. W

cites in the present point. (p. 11.) "That a desire of the favour and mercy of God in Christ, and the means to attain that favour, is a special grace of God, and hath the promise of blessedness:—That wicked men cannot sincerely desire these means of eternal life, faith, repentance, mortification, reconciliation," &c. And it is exceedingly contrary to the constant doctrine of Mr. Stoddard, (though he says it was his opinion,) who ever insisted, that all unconverted sinners under the gospel are so far from heartily consenting to the covenant of grace—and complying with the call of the gospel, and falling in with the terms of salvation proposed in it, renouncing all other ways, as Mr. W. supposes—that they are wilful rejecters of Christ, despisers of the gospel, and obstinate refusers of offered mercy. So he says, "The man that has but common grace—sets himself against the way of salvation which God prescribes." (Nat. of Sav. Conv.) "In awakened sinners, it is not merely from weakness, but from pride and sturdiness of spirit, that they do not come to Christ." (Safety of Ap. p. 229. *c. d.*) And in other places he says, that it is from the hardness and stubbornness of natural men's hearts, that they do not comply with the gospel; That there is a mighty opposition in their hearts to believe in Christ, because it is cross to their haughty spirits; That they are enemies to this way of salvation; That they are dreadfully averse to come to Christ. (See Book of three Sermons, p. 84. Guide to Christ, p. 55. *c.* Safety of Ap. p. 106. & 194. *e.*)

And this scheme of our author is in a glaring manner contrary to the doctrine of Mr. Williams himself, in his sermon on Isaiah xiv. 11. (p. 25, 26, 27.) Speaking to those whose natures remain unrenewed and unsanctified (see his words p. 25. *d.*) he says, p. 27. *b. c.* "You are opposing all the means of your own deliverance and salvation. The offers of grace, the allurements and invitations of the great Saviour of the world, have all been ineffectual to persuade you to accept of deliverance from a slavery you are willingly held in. Nay, you strive against the liberty of the sons of God, and labour to find out all manner of difficulties and hindrances in the way of it. If you pray for it, you do not desire it should yet come, but would stay a while longer." And are these the persons who can truly profess, that they comply with the call of the gospel, and submit to the proposals of it, and are satisfied with the device for our salvation, and with the offers of the gospel, and consent to the terms of the covenant of grace with all their hearts, renouncing all other ways? It is not much more easy to make these things consist with what he says in his answer to Mr. Croswell, (p. 26. *b. c.*) He there says, "There is not a son nor daughter of Adam excluded from salvation, who will accept Christ upon God's offer, and take him in his person and offices, and whole work of redemption, to be their

Saviour, and they find themselves willing to accept of Christ as so offered to them, and pleased with that device for their salvation, and heartily choosing him to be to them, and in them, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." (See also to the same purpose, Ibid. p. 32. *e.* & p. 33. *a b.* & p. 94. *c.*)

M. W. though he holds, that it is lawful for some unsanctified men to come to sacraments, yet supposes it not to be lawful for those that are lukewarm in religion to come. (p. 35. *d. e.*) So that according to his scheme some unsanctified professors are above lukewarmness; that is to say, their hearts within them are truly hot or fervent with Christian zeal, and they such as Christ will never spue out of his mouth; in a great inconsistence with the scripture. He suggests, that it is an injury done to the cause of truth, in me to represent Mr. Stoddard as being of another opinion. (p. 35. *c. d. e.*) But let us see whether such a representation be an injury to truth or no. Mr. S. taught, that natural men have no sincerity in them. (Guide to Christ, p. 60, 61.) That their hearts are dead as a stone, that their is no disposition or inclination to any thing that is good, but a total emptiness of all goodness. (Ibid. p. 63. *b.*) That some of them have considerable shews of goodness, there is an appearance of good desires, &c. but there is nothing of goodness in all this: that all they do is in hypocrisy. (Benef. of the Gos. p. 73. *d. c.*) That they are actuated by a lust of self-love in all their religion;—If they are swept and garnished, they are empty: there may be some similitude of faith and love, but no reality, not a spark of goodness in their hearts; though corruption may be restrained, yet it reigns. He speaks abundantly to the same purpose in his sermon, entitled, "Natural men are under the government of self-love."

And Mr. W. himself, in his sermon on Psal. xci. 1. describing carnal men, by which he means the same as unconverted men, (as is evident through the book, particularly p. 36. *c.*) says p. 27, 28. that to such "Religion looks like a dull unpleasant kind of exercise, and so different from the sensual joys and pleasures which they choose, that they hate to set about it, as long as they dare let it alone: and would do as little as ever they can at it:—That when they durst not let it alone any longer, they set about it, but would fain dispatch it as soon, and as easily as they can; because it seems to them a miserable uncomfortable sort of life. Ask your own conscience, (says he,) see if this be not the truth of the case." Now let the reader judge, whether this be a description of persons whom it would be injurious to represent as having nothing above lukewarmness.

Another thing, which Mr. W. supposes must be professed in order to come to sacraments, and therefore according to him is what an unsanctified man can profess, and speak true. is

"That they with all their hearts cast themselves upon the mercy of God, to help them to keep covenant." (p. 31. *e.* & p. 32. *a.*) And yet elsewhere he mentions a depending on Christ for things of this nature, as a discriminating mark of a true Christian. (Ser. on *Christ a King and Witness*, p. 19. *c.*) Under an use of examination, he there says, "Do you depend on Christ to protect you from all your spiritual enemies, to restore you to holiness, to subdue all your heart to the will of God, to make you partakers of his image and moral perfections, and in that way to preserve and lead you to your true perfection and eternal happiness?"

Mr. W. supposes (p. 36. *a. b. c.*) that the profession men must make in order to come to Sacraments, implies real friendship to God, loving God more than his enemies, loving him above the world: and therefore according to Mr. W. unsanctified men may make this profession also, and speak true: Contrary to the whole current of scripture, which represents unsanctified men as the enemies of God, those that have not the love of God in them, under the power of a carnal mind, &c. And contrary to the unanimous voice of all sound divines, yea, of the whole christian world. Mr. W. in the forementioned place blames me, that I had intimated (as he supposes) that the profession which Mr. Stoddard taught to be necessary, did not imply real friendship, and loving God above his enemies, and above the world. Let us then compare this with Mr. S—d's doctrine, as extant in his writings. He speaks of it as a property of saving grace, wherein it specifically differs from common grace, that a true love to God prizes God above all the world. (Nat. of Sav. Conv. p. 7. *b. c.*) That every natural man prefers vain and base things before God. (Ibid. p. 96. *b.*) That they are all enemies to God, and the very being of God. (Ibid. p. 5. *c. d.* and p. 97.) That their hearts are full of enmity to God. (Ibid. p. 55 *e.*) That they have an aversion to those gracious actions of loving God, and trusting in Christ, and are under the dominion of a contrary inclination. (Ibid. p. 67.) That those of them whose consciences are enlightened, and are reforming their lives, have no love; and that it is a burden to them that they suspect there is such a God, that they wish there was not such an one. And that they are haters of God, and are so addicted to their own interest, that they have a bitter spirit towards God, have an ill affection to him, and are adversaries to his felicity. (Ibid. p. 97. Three Serm. p. 38, 39.) That they are governed by a spirit of self-love, and are wholly destitute of love to God; that some of them confess that they have but little love to God; but indeed they have not one spark of love to God in their hearts. (Three Serm. p. 48.) That they set their interest at the right hand of God's glory,—as if God's honour were not to be regarded, compared with their interest, &c. &c. (Ibid. p. 63, 64.)

So Mr. W. himself (Christ a King and Witness, p. 145. *e.*) plainly supposes, that before conversion men love the world more than God. For speaking of the nature of the change wrought in conversion, he says, things are quite turned about, God and Christ are got into the place the world had before. (Ibid. p. 18. *b.*) Again he says, "You must know that there is no man who is not either a true subject to Christ, or his enemy. That man who does not submit to Christ as his King and Lord, by bearing true faith and allegiance to him, is the enemy of Christ and his kingdom. Such are all they who will not depend on him, believe in him, give up themselves, and all to him." And again, (p. 106. *e.* 107. *a.*) "Man since the fall has a natural unlikeness to God, and *hates* the holiness and purity of the divine nature." And in his sermon on Isa. xlv. 11, he says to his hearers, If your nature remain unrenewed and unsanctified,——you are the enemies of God and Christ by wicked works, and an impure heart.—But yet now it seems, some of those may profess real friendship to Christ, and loving him above the world, and speak true.

And these things are no less inconsistent with what Mr. W. says in the very book under consideration. He here says, (p. 36.) "Why should any divine now tell us, that these same professions do not imply that there are any pretences of any real friendship, that they import no pretence of loving God more, yea, not so much as his enemies; no pretence to love God above the world?"—When he himself is the divine that tells us so, or plainly supposes so in this very book of his. For, in p. 8, 9, having mentioned the profession communicants may be required to make, he then says, that such a profession contains all that is essential to true religion in it; and if this is the first fruit of the love of God, it is true godliness: Plainly supposing, that persons may have these things without the love of God; as the reader will see more evidently if he views the place. So that the profession must imply real friendship, and love to God, even above the world; and yet must contain only such things as may be with or without the love of God indiscriminately.

Mr. W. allows, that in order to come to sacraments men ought to profess a subjection to Christ with all their hearts, (p. 10. *d.*) and to be devoted to the service of God, (p. 49. *d.*) and to give up themselves to Christ, to be taught, ruled, and led by him in a gospel-way to salvation, (p. 31. *e.* and p. 32. *a.*) And though he and Mr. Stoddard taught, that it is lawful for some unsanctified men to come to sacraments, yet Mr. W. supposes it to be unlawful for any to come to sacraments, serving two masters; and says Mr. S. taught that they ought to covenant with God with their whole hearts, and give up all their hearts and lives to Christ. We are therefore to understand Mr. W. that some unsanctified

men can profess all these things, and speak true. Strange doctrine for a Christian divine! Let us see whether Mr. S. taught such doctrine. He taught that faith in Christ is the first act of obedience, that any sinner does perform; that it is by faith that a man first gives himself to be God's servant. (Safety of App. p. 228. *e.* p. 229. *a.*) That all those who are not converted, are under the dominion of sin, enemies to God. (Ibid. p. 5. *c. d.*) That there is no obedience to God in what they do, who have only common grace; That they do not attend the will of God, (Ibid. p. 7. *d.*) That all ungodly men are servants to Satan, and live in a way of rebellion against God. (Ibid. p. 94. *b.*) That they are enemies to the authority of God; to the wisdom, power, and justice of God, yea to the very being of God; they have a preparedness of heart to all wickedness that is committed in the world, if God did not restrain them; that if they were in the circumstances that the fallen angels were in, they would be as the very devils; (Ibid. p. 95.) That their hearts are like the hearts of devils, as full of sin as a toad is full of poison, having no inclination to any thing that is good. (Guide to Christ, p. 68; see also Benefit of the Gospel, p. 130. *a. b.*) That they utterly neglect the end they were made for, and make it their business to serve themselves; they care not whether God's glory sinks or swims. (Three Sermons, p. 62.) That they hate God, because God crosses them in his laws. (Ibid. p. 38. *c.*) These are the men, which Mr. W. supposes must, and may (some of them) truly profess a subjection to Christ with all their hearts, and to be devoted to Christ; and the men that Mr. S. taught, might covenant with God with their whole hearts, and give up all their hearts and lives to Christ. Mr. Stoddard taught, that men that have but common grace, go quite in another path than that which God directs to—That they set themselves against the way of salvation God prescribes; Safety, p 10.) That man in his natural state is an enemy to the way of salvation; That he is an enemy to the law of God, and the gospel of Jesus Christ. (Ibid. p. 106. *b. c.*) But yet these, if we believe Mr. W. may truly profess a subjection to Christ with all their hearts, and give up themselves to him, to be taught, ruled, and led by him in a gospel-way of salvation. Yet if we believe him, we must have the trouble of disbelieving him again; for in these things he is as inconsistent with himself, as he is with Mr. S. For in his Sermon, on Isa. xlv. 11. (p. 26, 27.) he says to those whose natures are unrenewed and unsanctified, "If you are without Christ, you are in a state of slavery to sin, led about of divers lusts, and under the reigning power and dominion of your corruptions, which debase your souls, and bring them down from the dignity of their nature, to the vilest, most shameful and accursed bondage. And by

means of sin, ye are in bondage to the devil, the most hateful and accursed enemy of God and your own souls;* and are opposing all the means of your own deliverance. The offers of grace, the calls and invitations of the gospel, have all been ineffectual to persuade you to accept of deliverance from a slavery you are willingly held in. Nay, you strive against the liberty of the sons of God." And yet some of these are (if we believe what Mr. W now says) subject to Christ with all their hearts, give up all their hearts and lives to Christ, and give up themselves to be taught, ruled, and led by him in a gospel-way to salvation. Mr. W. in his sermons on Christ a King and Witness, (p. 81.) under a use of examination, giving marks of trial, says, "Have you unreservedly given up your souls and bodies to him? [viz. Christ.] You must be all Christ's, and have *no other Master*. You must be given to him without reserve, both in body and spirit, which are his." But now it seems, these are no discriminating evidences of true piety: he says, (ibid.p. 118.) "A man naturally hates God should reign." And (p. 119. *c.*) speaking of the natural man, he says, "He hates to be controlled, and in all things subjected to God; he really owns no God but himself." But if so, then certainly he is not subject to God with all his heart.

Our author in the book more especially attended to, says, (p. 31. *d. e.*) He knows of nobody who has any controversy with me in what he calls my loose way of arguing, in my saying, "The nature of things seems to afford no good reason why the people of Christ should not openly profess a proper respect to him in their hearts, as well as a true notion of him in their heads." And then, in that and the following page, proceeds to show what respect Mr. S. and those that think with him, suppose men must profess in order to come to the Lord's supper; and (in p. 33. *a.*) speaks of such a profession as is equally honourable to Christ, with a profession of saving grace. And as, according to Mr. W. no profession discriminating what is professed from common grace, can be required, so common grace must be supposed to be a proper respect to Christ in the heart. Now let us see what Mr. S. says:—"There is (says he) an opposition between saving and common grace;—they have a contrariety one to another, and are at war one with the other, and would destroy one the other. Common graces are *lusts*, and do oppose saving grace. (Nat. of Sav. Conv. p. 9. *d. e.*) "Men that are in a natural condition, such of them as are addicted to morality and religion, are serving their *lusts* therein. The most orderly natural men do live in an ungodly life;—yea, their very

* And yet now it seems, some such do serve but one master, and give up themselves to Christ to be led by him.

religion is iniquity." (Ibid. p. 96, 97.)—" Their best works are not only sinful, but properly sins; they are actuated by a *spirit of lust* in all that they do." (Saf. of App. p. 168. *d.*)—" Moral virtues do not render men acceptable to God; for though they look like virtues, yet they are *lusts*." (Ibid. p. 81.)—Now the question plainly is, Whether *lust* can be a proper respect to Christ in the heart? And, Whether a profession which implies no more in it, be equally honourable to Christ, as a credible profession of a gracious respect to him.

SECT. VI.

Concerning Visibility without apparent Probability.

Mr. Stoddard (Appeal, p. 16.) says thus: " Such persons as the apostles did admit into gospel churches, are fit to be admitted into them; but they admitted many that had not a thorough work of regeneration. Indeed by the rule that God has given for admissions, if carefully attended, more unconverted persons will be admitted, than converted."

This passage I took notice of in my book, where I say, " I would humbly inquire, How those visible qualifications can be the ground of a rational judgment, that a person is circumcised in heart, which nevertheless at the same time, we are sensible, are so far from being probable signs of it, that they are more frequently without it, than with it," &c. This seems to be a terrible thing in Mr. W.'s way, which he strikes at from time to time; and is an impediment he boggles at exceedingly. One while he pretends, he can give a sufficient answer: (p. 7, 8.) At another time he pretends, that I remove the difficulty myself: (p. 12.) Then again, in the same page, he pretends to solve the difficulty; and then in the next page pretends, that if the case be as I say, That we cannot form a rational judgment that a thing is, which at the same time, and under that degree of light we then stand in, it more probably is a mistaken one, than not, yet it can argue nothing to the case; seeing the judgment we do form, is directed by a rule which is appointed for us. But still as if not satisfied with these answers and remarks, he seems afterwards to suggest, that Mr. S did not express this as his own sentiment, but as Mr. Cotton's, as a gentleman of the same principles with Mr. Mather, using it as *argumentum ad hominem.* See p. 33.

In p. 34. *a.* he expressly says, " Mr. S. does not say, That when the rule which God has given for admissions is care-

fully attended, it leaves reason to believe, that the greater part of those who are admitted, are enemies to God," &c.—True, he does not say this in terms: but he says, "more unconverted persons will be admitted, than converted:"—which is equivalent. And (p. 133. *a.*) Mr. W. presumes confidently to affirm, that Mr. S. says this [the thing fore-mentioned] not with peculiar relation to his own scheme, but only as an application of a saying of Mr. Cotton's, who was of a different opinion, and said upon a different scheme; to shew, that upon their own principles, the matter will not be mended. But this is contrary to the most plain fact. For Mr. S. having said, The apostles admitted many unconverted, he immediately adds the passage in dispute, indeed by the rule, &c. plainly expressing his own sentiment; though he backs it with a saying of Mr. Cotton's. So, Mr. Cotton's words come in as a confirmation of Mr. S——d's; and not Mr. S——d's as an application of Mr. Cotton's. However, Mr. W. delivers the same sentiment as his own, once and again, in his book: he delivers it as his own sentiment, (p. 34.) that probably many more hypocrites, than real saints, do make such a profession, as that which must be accepted. He delivers it as his own sentiment, (p. 61. *e.*) That the apostles judged it likely, that of the Christians taken into the church under their direction, as many were hypocrites in proportion to their number, as of those that were taken into the Jewish church.—And as to the latter, he delivers it as his sentiment, (p. 24. *a.*) That the body of the people were not regenerate. So that, according to his own sentiments, when the apostolical rule of taking in is observed, the body of those who are admitted will be hypocrites.

Now therefore, I desire that this matter may be examined to the very bottom.—And here let it be considered, whether the truth of the following things be not incontestable.

1. If indeed by the rule God has given for admissions, when it is carefully attended, more unconverted persons will be admitted, than converted; then it will follow, That just such a visibility or visible appearance of saintship as the rule requires, is more frequently without real saintship, than with it.

2. If Mr. S. and Mr. W. had just reason from the holy scripture, and divine providence, to think thus, and to publish such a sentiment, and the Christian church has good reason to believe them; then God has given the Christian church in its present state, (dark and imperfect as it is,) good reason to think so too.

3. If Christ by the rule he has given for admissions, requires his churches to receive such a visibility or appearance, which he has given the same churches at the same time reason to judge to

be an appearance that for the most part is without godliness, or more frequently connected with ungodliness; then he requires them to receive such an appearance, as he at the same time has given them reason to think does not imply a probability of godliness, but is attended rather with a probability of ungodliness. For that is the notion of probability; an appearance, which so far as we have means to judge, is for the most part connected with the thing.* Therefore the sign or appearance, let it be what it will, implies a probability of that which we have reason to think it is for the most part connected or attended with. Where there is only probability without certainty, there is a peradventure in the case on both sides; or in vulgar language, the supposition on both sides stands a chance to be true. But that side which most commonly proves true in such a case, stands the best chance; and therefore properly on that side lies the probability.

4. That cannot be a credible visibility or appearance, which is not a probable appearance. To say, a thing is credible and not probable, is a contradiction. And it is impossible rationally to judge a thing true, and at the same time rationally to judge a thing most probably not true. Therefore it is absurd (not to say worse,) to talk of any divine institution, leading us thus to judge. It would be to suppose, that God by his institution has made that judgment rational, which he at the same time makes improbable, and therefore irrational.

This notion of admitting members into the church of Christ without and against probability of true piety, is not only very inconsistent with itself, but very inconsistent with what the common light of mankind teaches in their dealings one with another. Common sense teaches all mankind, in admission of members into societies, at least societies formed for very great and important purposes, to admit none but those concerning whom there is an apparent probability, that they are the hearty friends of the society, and of the main designs and interests of it; and especially not to admit such concerning whom there is a greater probability of their being habitual fixed enemies. But thus it is, according to Mr. S.'s and Mr. W.'s doctrine, as well as the doctrine of the scripture, with all unsanctified men in regard to the church of Christ. They are enemies to the head of the so-

*Mr. Locke thus defines probability. (Hum. Und 7th edit. 8vo. vol. ii. p. 273.) "Probability is nothing but the appearance of such an agreement or disagreement, by the intervention of proofs, whose connection is not constant and immutable, or at least is not perceived to be so; but is, or appears for the most part to be so; and is enough to induce the mind to judge the proposition to be true, or false, rather than the contrary.

And Mr. W. himself (p. 139.) says, "It is moral evidence of gospel sincerity, which God's word makes the church's rule," &c. Now does such an appearance, as we have reason at the same time to think is more frequently without gospel-holiness than with it, amount to moral evidence of gospel sincerity?

ciety, enemies to his honour and authority, and the work of salvation in the way of the gospel; the upholding and promoting of which is the main design of the society. The church is represented in scripture as the household of God, in a peculiar manner intrusted with the care of his name and honour in the world, the interests of his kingdom, the care of his jewels, and most precious things. And would not common sense teach an earthly prince not to admit into his household such as he had no reason to look upon so much as probable friends and loyal subjects in their hearts? but rather friends and slaves in their hearts to his enemies and competitors for his crown and dignity? The visible church of Christ is often represented as his city and his army. Now would not common sense teach the inhabitants of a besieged city to open the gates to none, but those concerning whom there is at least an apparent probability of their not being enemies? And would any imagine, that in a militant state of things it is a likely way to promote the interest of the war, to fill up the army with such as are more likely to be on the enemies' side in their hearts, than on the side of their lawful and rightful prince, and his faithful soldiers and subjects?

SECT. VII.

Concerning the Lord's Supper being a converting ordinance.

Though Mr. W. holds, that none are to be admitted to the Lord's supper, but such as make a credible profession of real godliness, and are to be admitted under that notion, and with respect to such a character appearing on them; yet he holds at the same time, that the Lord's supper is a converting ordinance, an ordinance designed for the bringing of some men that have not such a character, to be of such a character, (p. 14. *c. d.* p. 15. p. 35. *a. b.* p. 83. *b.* p. 100. *e.* p. 101. *a.* p. 126, 127.) It is evident, that the meaning of those divines who speak of the Lord's supper as a converting ordinance, is not merely that God in his sovereign providence will use it as an occasion of the conversion of some; but that it is a converting means by his institution given to men, appointing them to use it for this purpose. Thus Mr. Stoddard expressly declares, That the Lord's supper is *instituted* to be a means of regeneration, (Doct. of Inst. Churches, p. 22. a.) *instituted* for the conversion of sinners, as well as the confirmation of saints; (Appeal, p. 70. *c.* p. 71. *a.*) that the direct end of it is conversion, when the subject that it is administered unto, stands in need of conversion. (Ibid. p. 73, 74.) And thus Mr. W. after Mr. S. speaks of the Lord's supper as by Christ's appointment a proper means of

the conversion of some that are unconverted; (p. 100. *e.* p. 101. *a.*) so he speaks of it as instituted for the conversion of sinners (p. 126. and 127.)

Now if so, what need of men being, to rational charity, converted already, in order to their coming to the Lord's supper? Is it reasonable to suppose God would institute this ordinance directly for that end, that sinners might be converted by it; and then charge his ministers and churches not to admit any that they had not reasonable ground to think were converted already? —Mr. W. (in p. 83. *b.*) supposes two ends of Christ's appointing the communion of the Christian church; that such as have grace already should be under proper advantages to gain more, and that those who have none, should be under proper advantages to attain grace. But this ill consists with other parts of his scheme.—If a king should erect a hospital for the help of the poor, and therein has two ends; one, the nourishing of such as are in health, and the other, the healing of the sick; and furnishes the hospital accordingly, with proper food for the healthy, and proper remedies for the sick: but at the same time charges the officers, to whom he commits the care of the hospital by no means to admit any, unless it be under a notion of their being in health, and from respect to such a qualification in them, and unless they have reasonable ground and moral evidence to induce them to believe that that they are well: And if this pretence should be made to justify such a conduct, that the hospital was indeed designed for the healing of the sick, yet it was designed to confer this benefit only on such diseased people as were hypocrites, and made a profession and pretence of being in health; will any man presume to say, that such a conduct is agreeable to the dictates of the understanding of rational beings? And to suppose, that such should be the conduct of the infinitely wise God, is as unscriptural as it is unreasonable. We often read in God's word, of men's being convinced of their wickedness, and confessing their sins, as a way to be healed and cleansed from sin: But where do we read of men's pretending to more goodness than they have, and making an hypocritical profession and shew of goodness, in order to their becoming good men? *

*Mr. Williams (p. 42.) owns, that persons must make a profession wherein they make a shew of being wise virgins, in order to come into the visible Church. And (p. 35. *e.*) he owns, that all visible saints who are not truly pious, are hypocrites. Again, it may be observed, he abundantly insists, that men who have no more than common grace and moral sincerity, may lawfully come to sacraments; and yet by what he says, (p. 35. *e.*) they must profess more. So that men who have no more must profess more; and this, it seems, according to divine institution!—Again he says, (p. 35. *a. b. c.*) That one end God designed by appointing men to be brought into the Church, is, that through divine grace they might effectually be brought to Christ, to give him the whole possession of their hearts; and yet in the very next paragraph (p. 35. *e.* and 36. *a.*) he speaks of it as unlawful for men to come to sacraments till they give up all their hearts to Christ.

Where have we a divine institution, that any who are wolves should put on sheep's clothing, and so come to his people, that they may believe them to be sheep, and under this notion receive them into the flock, to the end that they may truly become of his sheep?

But to examine this matter, of the Lord's supper being a converting ordinance to ungodly men professing godliness, a little more exactly. If Christ has appointed the Lord's supper to be a converting ordinance to some such as these, then he has appointed it either only for such of them as are mistaken, and think themselves godly when they are not; or he has appointed it not only for such, but also for such as are sensible they are ungodly.

If it be appointed as a converting ordinance only for such as are mistaken, and think themselves converted; then here is an institution of Christ, which never can, in any one instance, be made use of to the end for which he has appointed men to use it. It cannot be used for this end by those who admit members and administer the ordinance: For they, as Mr. W. says, must admit none but such as they are bound by the rule of Christ to look upon as godly men already, and to administer the sacrament to them under that notion, and with respect to such a character. Neither can it be used to such a purpose by any of the communicants: For by the supposition, they must be all such as think they are converted already, and also come under that notion. So that by this scheme of things, here is an institution appointed to be upheld and used in the church, which the institution itself makes void and impossible. For, as was observed before, the notion of a converting ordinance has not a reference to any secret decree of God, how he in his sovereign pleasure will sometimes use it; but to his institution given to men, appointing the end for which they should use it. Therefore, on the present supposition, the institution appoints the Lord's supper to be used in some cases for the conversion of sinners, but at the same time forbids its being either given or received under any other notion than that of the communicant's being converted already: Which is in effect to forbid its being either given or received for the conversion of the communicant, in any one instance. So that the institution effectually destroys and disannuls itself.—But God forbid that we should ascribe any such inconsistent institutions to the divine head of the church!

Or if the other part of the disjunction be taken, and it be said, the Lord's supper is appointed for the conversion of some that are sensible they are ungodly or unconverted, the consequence is no less absurd, on Mr. W.'s principles. For then the scheme is this. The institution requires some men to make a pretence of real piety, and to make a public solemn profession of gos-

pel-holiness, which at the same time they are sensible they have not; and this, to the end that others may look upon them to be real saints, and receive them to the Lord's supper under that notion: Not putting on a disguise, and making a shew of what they have not, through mistake, but doing it consciously and wilfully, to the honour and glory of God: And all this strictly required of them, as the instituted means of their becoming real saints, and the children of God!

Mr. W. says, (p. 14. *d.*) "Since it is God's will, that his church should admit all such visible saints, [*viz.* such as he had been speaking of,] it follows, that the Lord's supper is a converting ordinance to such of them as are unconverted." But Mr. W. is mistaken as to his consequence. The Lord's supper is not instituted to be a converting ordinance to all unconverted men, whom it is God's will the church should admit. For it may be the church's duty, and so God's will, to admit those that live secretly in the grossest wickedness, as adultery, uncleanness, deism, &c. Such men as these may make a fair profession, and the church may be ignorant of their secret wickedness, and therefore may have no warrant to reject them: But yet it will not follow, that God by his institution has given such a lawful right to the Lord's supper, having appointed it to be a converting ordinance to them.

SECT. VIII.

The notion of moral sincerity's *being the qualification, which gives a lawful right to Christian sacraments, examined.*

Though our author disdains the imputation of any such notion, as that of men's being called visible and professed saints from respect to a visibility and profession of moral sincerity: Yet it is manifest, that in his scheme, (whether consistently or no, others must judge,) moral sincerity is the qualification which entitles, and gives a lawful right, to sacraments. For he holds, that it is lawful for unsanctified men, who have this qualification, to come to sacraments; and that it is not lawful for them to come without it. Therefore I desire this notion may be thoroughly examined.

And for the greater clearness, let it be observed what sincerity in general is. Now sincerity, in the general notion of it, is an honest conformity of some profession or outward shew of some inward property or act of mind, to the truth and reality of it. If there be a shew or pretence of what is not, and has no real existence, then the pretence is altogether vain; it is

only a pretence, and nothing else: And therefore is a pretence or shew without any sincerity, of any kind, either moral or gracious.

I now proceed to offer the following arguments against the notion of moral sincerity being the qualification, which gives a lawful right to sacraments.

I. There is no such thing as moral sincerity, in the covenant of grace, distinct from gracious sincerity. If any sincerity at all be requisite in order to a title to the seals of the covenant of grace, doubtless it is the sincerity which belongs to that covenant. But there is only one sort of sincerity which belongs to that covenant; and that is a gracious sincerity. There is but one sort of faith belonging to that covenant; and that is saving faith in Jesus Christ, called in scripture unfeigned faith. As for the faith of devils, it is not the faith of the covenant of grace.

Here the distinction of an internal and external covenant, will not help at all; as long as the covenant, of which the sacraments are seals, is a covenant of salvation, or a covenant proposing terms of eternal salvation. The sacraments are seals of such a covenant. They are seals of the New Testament in Christ's blood, (Matt. xxi. 28. Luke xxii. 28.) a Testament which has better promises than the Old, (Heb. viii. 6.) and which the apostle tells us, makes us heirs of the eternal inheritance. (Heb. ix. 15.)—Mr. W. himself speaks of the covenant sealed in baptism, as the covenant proposing terms of salvation. (p. 23. *b. c*) So he speaks of the covenant entered into by a visible people, as the covenant in which God offers everlasting happiness. (p. 24, 25.) But there is no other religion, no other sincerity, belonging to this covenant of salvation, but that which accompanies salvation, or is saving religion and sincerity. As it is written, (Psal. li. 6.) Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts.

There is what may be called a moral sincerity, in distinction from saving, in many moral things; as in loving our friends and neighbours, in loving our country, in choosing the Protestant religion before the Popish, in a conscientious care to do many duties, in being willing to take a great deal of pains in religion, in being sorry for the commission of such and such acts of wickedness, &c. But there are some duties, which, unless they are done with a gracious sincerity, they cannot be done at all. As Mr. Stoddard observes, (Safety of Ap. p. 216.) "There are some duties which cannot be done but from a gracious respect to God." Thus, there is but one sort of sincerity in loving God as God, and setting our hearts on him as our highest happiness, loving him above the world, and loving holiness above all the objects of our lusts. He that does not these things with a gracious sincerity, never really doth them at all. He that truly does

them, is certainly a godly man; as we are abundantly assured by the word of God. So, there is but one sort of sincere and cordial consent to the covenant of grace, but one sort of giving all our hearts to Jesus Christ; which things Mr. W. allows to be necessary, to come to sacraments. That to which a man's heart is full of reigning enmity, he cannot with any reality at all cordially consent to and comply with: but the hearts of unsanctified men are full of reigning enmity to the covenant of grace, according to the doctrine of scripture, and according to the doctrine of Mr. S. and Mr. W. too, as we have seen before.

However, if there were any such thing, as being heartily willing to accept of Christ, and a giving all our hearts to Christ, without a saving sincerity, this would not be a complying with the terms of a covenant of salvation. For it is self-evident, that only something which is saving, is a compliance with the terms of salvation. Now Mr. W. himself often allows (as has been observed) that persons must comply with the terms of the covenant of grace, in order to come to sacraments. Yet because he also in effect denies it, I shall say something further in confirmation of it.

I. The sacraments are covenant privileges. Mr. W. himself calls them so. (p. 5. *a. b.*) Covenant privileges are covenant benefits, or benefits to which persons have a right by the covenant. But persons can have no right to any of the benefits of a covenant, without compliance with its terms. For that is the very notion of the terms of a covenant, *viz.* Terms of an interest in the benefits of that covenant. It is so in all covenants whatsoever; if a man refuses to comply with its conditions, he can claim nothing by that covenant.

2. If we consider the sacraments as seals of the covenant, the same thing is evident, *viz.* That a man can have no right to them without a compliance with the terms. The sacraments are not only seals of the offer on God's part, or ordinances God has appointed as confirmations of the truth of his covenant, as Mr. W. seems to insist. (p. 74, 75.) For considered merely as seals and confirmations of the truth of the gospel, they are (as miracles and other evidences of the Christian religion) seals equally given to Christians, Jews, Deists, moral and vicious and the whole world that knows of them. Whereas, it is manifest, in the nature of the thing, sacraments are seals of the covenant to be applied to the communicant, and of which he is the immediate subject, in a peculiar manner, as a party in covenant Otherwise, what need would there be of his being one of God's covenant people, in any sense whatsoever?

But now it is not reasonable to suppose, that the seal of the covenant belongs to any man, as a party in the covenant, who will not accept of and comply with the covenant. He that re-

jects the covenant, and will not comply with it, has no interest in it. And he that has no interest in the covenant, has no right to the seals; for the covenant and its seals go together. It is so in all covenants among mankind; after a man has come into a bargain proposed and offered by another, yielding to the terms of it, he has a right to have the bargain sealed, and confirmed to him, as a party in the covenant; but not before.

And if what the communicant does be a seal on his part also, as the nature of the thing demonstrates, seeing he is active in the matter, and as Mr. W. seems willing to allow, (p. 75.) it will follow, with equal evidence, that a man cannot lawfully partake, unless he yields to, and complies with the covenant. To what purpose is a man's sealing an instrument or contract, but to confirm it as his own act and deed, and to declare his compliance with his part of the contract. As when a servant seals his indenture, it is a testimony and ratification of his compliance as to the proposed contract with his master. And if a covenant of friendship be proposed between two parties, and they both put their seal to it, hereby they both testify and declare their mutual friendship.

It has been already observed, that unsanctified men, while such, cannot with any sincerity at all testify a present cordial compliance with the covenant of grace: and as they cannot do this, so neither can they with any sincerity promise a future compliance with that covenant. Mr. W. often allows, that in order to Christian communion men must promise a compliance with the covenant, in its spiritual and saving duties; that they will believe and repent in the sense of the covenant, willingly accept of Christ and his salvation, love him and live to him, and will do it immediately, henceforward, from this moment.(p. 25. *c. e.* p. 26. *a.* p. 28. *a. c.* and p. 76. *a. b.*) But how absurd is this, when at the same instant, while they are making and uttering these promises, they are entirely averse to any such thing; being then enemies to Christ, willingly rejecting him, opposing his salvation, striving against it, labouring to find out all manner of difficulties and hindrances in the way of it, not desiring it should come yet, &c.; which our author, in a place fore-cited, says is the case with all unsanctified men.

And when unsanctified men promise that they will spend the rest of their lives in universal obedience to Christ, there is no sincerity in such promises; because there is not such a heart in them. There is no man but a true disciple of Christ, that is willing thoroughly to deny himself for him, and follow him in a way of obedience to all his commands, unto the end, through all difficulties which Christ has given his followers reason to expect, or commanded them to prepare for; as is evident by Christ's frequent declarations. (Luke xiv. 25—33. *Matth.* x. 37. 38. 39.

chap. xiii. 44, 45, 46, and many parallel places.) If an unsanctified man thinks he is willing, he does not know his own heart. If he professes to be willing, he does not know what he says. The difficulty and cost of it is not in his view: and therefore he has no proper willingness to comply with the cost and difficulty. That which he is willing for, with a moral sincerity, is something else, which is a great deal easier, and less cross to flesh and blood. Suppose a king should propose to a subject his building him such a tower, promising him a certain reward. If the subject should undertake it, not counting the cost, thinking within himself that the king meant another sort of tower, much cheaper; and should be willing only to build that cheap one, which he imagined in his own mind; when he would by no means have consented to build so costly a tower as the king proposed, if he had understood him right: such a man could not be said properly to be willing to comply with his prince's proposal, with any sincerity at all. For what he consents to with a moral sincerity, is not the thing which the king proposed.

The promises of unsanctified men are like the promises of the man we read of (Luke ix. 57, 58.) who said, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. To whom Christ replied, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head. When he made his promise, he probably quite mistook the thing, and did not imagine, that to follow Christ wherever he went would be to follow him in such poverty and hardship. I suppose, the rich young man we read of (Mark x. 17, &c.) might have what is called moral sincerity. But he had no sincerity in the covenant of grace. When he came to Christ to know what he should do to have eternal life, it is probable he ignorantly thought himself willing to yield himself to Christ's direction. Yet when it came to a trial, and Christ told him he must go and sell all that he had, and give to the poor, it proved that he had no sincerity of willingness at all for any such thing.—So that it is evident, however unsanctified men may be morally sincere in some things, yet they have no sincerity of any sort in that covenant, of which the sacraments are seals; and that moral sincerity, distinct from gracious, in this covenant, is a mere imagination, there being indeed no such thing.

II. Another argument against this notion of moral sincerity, giving a right to church communion, is this: A quality that is transient and vanishing, can be no qualification of fitness for a standing privilege. Unsanctified men may be very serious, greatly affected, and much engaged in religion; but the scripture compares their religion to a lamp not supplied with oil, which will go out, and to a plant that has no root nor deepness of earth, which will soon wither; and compares such unsanctified

men to the dog that will return to his vomit, and to the sow which though washed ever so clean, yet her nature not being changed, will return to her wallowing in the mire.

Mr. W. allows, that persons in order to come to sacraments must have deep convictions, an earnest concern to obtain salvation, &c. Now every one who is in any degree acquainted with religious matters, knows that such convictions are not wont to last a great while, if they have no saving issue. Mr S. in his sermon on the danger of speedy degeneracy, (p. 11.) says, " Unconverted men will grow weary of religious duties. " And our author himself, (p. 78. *c.*) speaking of those professors in the primitive churches that fell away to heresy and other wickedness, takes notice that the apostle observes, IT WILL BE SO, that they which are approved, might be made manifest: and, says Mr. W. upon it, evil and unsanctified men, by such sins, will discover their hypocrisy.

Now seeing this is the case with moral sincerity and common religion, how can it be a qualification for a standing privilege? Nothing can be a fitness for a durable privilege, but a durable qualification. For no qualification has any fitness or adaptedness for more than it extends to; as a short scabbard cannot be fit for a long sword. If a man going a journey in the night, needs a lamp to light him in his way, who will pretend that a flaming wick without oil, which will last but a few rods, is fit for his purpose? Or if a man were building a house for himself and family, should he put into the frame pieces of timber known to be of such a nature as that they would probably be rotten in a few months; or should he take blocks of ice, instead of hewn stone, because during a present cold season they seemed to be hard and firm; and withal should for a covering put only leaves that will soon fade away, instead of tiles or shingles, that are solid and lasting; would not every spectator ridicule his folly!

If it should be said, that unsanctified men, when they lose their moral sincerity, may be cast out again: this is far from helping the case, or shewing that such men were ever fit to be admitted. To say, a piece of timber, though not of a durable nature, is fit to be put into the frame of a building, because when it begins to rot, it may be pulled out again, is so far from proving that it was ever fit to be put in, that the speedy necessity of pulling it out rather proves the contrary. If we had the power of constituting a human body, or it were left to us to add members to our own bodies, as there might be occasion; we should not think such a member was fit to be added to the frame, that had already radically seated in it a cancer or gangrene, by which it could last but a little while itself, and would endanger the other members: though it were true, that when the

disease should prevail, there were surgeons which might be procured to cut that member off.

But to consider a little further this point of moral sincerity qualifying persons for the privileges of the church. I would lay down this proposition as a thing of clear evidence: Those persons have no fitness in themselves to come to the privileges of the church, who, if they were known, would not be fit to be admitted by others. For to say, they are fit to be members, and yet not fit to be allowed to be members, is apparently absurd. But they who have no better fitness than moral sincerity, if that were known, would not be fit to be admitted by others; as is allowed by Mr. W. For he holds, that in order to be fit to be admitted by others, they must credibly appear to them to have something more than moral sincerity, even gospel-holiness. And it is evident in itself, as well as allowed by Mr. W. that if such were known, they would not be fit to be admitted, only on their moral sincerity, and the profession and promises they make from such a principle; and that for this reason, because such a principle alone would not be fit to be trusted. God himself has taught his church, that the religion of unsanctified men is not fit to be trusted; as a lamp without oil, and a plant without root, are things not to be trusted.—God has directly taught his church to expect, that such religion will fail; and that such men having no higher principle, will return to their wickedness. (Job. xxvii. 8, 9, 10.)" The hypocrite—will he delight himself in the Almighty? will he always call upon God?" Dan. xii. 10. The wicked will do wickedly. And therefore God does not require his church to accept their profession and promises. If he has taught us not to credit their profession and promises, then certainly he has taught us not to accept them.

III. Another argument against this supposed rule of allowing and requiring unsanctified men with moral sincerity, to come to sacraments, is this; That rule, which if fully attended, would naturally bring it to pass, that the greater part of communicants would be unfit, even according to that very rule, cannot be a divine rule. But this supposed rule of moral sincerity is such a rule. For if this rule be universally attended, then all unsanctified men, who have present convictions of conscience sufficient to make them morally sincere, must come into the communion of the church. But this conviction and common religion, if it do not issue in conversion, (as has been observed,) commonly vanishes away in a short time. And yet still these persons, if not convicted of open scandal, are left in the communion of the church, and remain there, without even moral sincerity.—Experience gives us abundant reason to think, that of those who some time or other have considerable convictions of conscience, so as to make them for the present to be what is called morally sin-

cere, but few are savingly converted.* And if all these must be admitted, (as they must, if this rule be fully attended,) then their convictions going away, and their sincerity vanishing with it, it will hereby be brought about, that the Lord's table is chiefly surrounded with the worst sort of morally insincere persons, viz. stupid backsliders, that are in themselves far worse than they were before, according to the scripture account, Matt. xii. 45. and 2 Pet. ii. 20.—And this as the natural consequence of the forementioned rule, appointing moral sincerity to be the qualification for communion. Thus this supposed rule supplants its own design.

IV. Another argument that moral sincerity is not the qualification to which God has annexed a lawful right to sacraments, is, That this qualification is not at all inconsistent with a man's living at the same time in the most heinous wickedness in a superlative degree contrary to the Christian religion.

It was before observed to be a thing evident in itself, and allowed by Mr. W. that there are some sins, which, while wilfully continued and lived in, though secretly, do wholly disqualify persons for Christian sacraments, and make it unlawful for men to partake of them. Now if it be thus with some sins, doubtless it is because of the heinousness of those sins, the high degree of wickedness which is in them. And hence it will follow, that those sins which are in themselves most heinous, and most contrary to the Christian religion, do especially disqualify persons for Christian sacraments, when wilfully lived in.

Let it therefore now be considered, whether it will not follow from these premises, That for men to live in enmity against God and Christ, and in wilful unbelief and rejection of Christ, (as the scriptures teach, and as Mr. S. and Mr. W. too assert, is the case with all unsanctified men under the gospel,) wholly disqualifies them for Christian sacraments. For it is very manifest, by scripture and reason, that to live in these things, is to live in some of the most heinous kinds of wickedness; as is allowed by Calvinistic divines in general, and by Mr. S. in particular, who says, (Safety of Ap. p. 224. *d.*) "You cannot anger God more by any thing, than by continuing in the neglect of Christ. This is the great controversy God has with sinners; not that they have been guilty of these and those particular transgressions, but that they abide in the rejection of the gospel." Again, he says, (Ibid. p. 249. *e.*) "The great sin that God is angry with you for, is your unbelief. Despising the gospel is the great provoking sin."

* How small a proportion are there of the vast multitudes, that in the time of the late religious commotion through the land had their consciences awakened, who give hopeful abiding evidences of a saving conversion to God?

A man's continuing in hatred of his brother, especially a fellow-communicant, is generally allowed to disqualify for communion. The apostle compares it to leaven in the passover, 1 Cor. v. 6, 7, 8. But now certainly it is as bad, and as contrary to the nature and design of Christian sacraments, for a man to live in hatred of Christ, and to remain a hateful and accursed enemy, (if I may use Mr. W.'s own language,) to the glorious Redeemer and Head of the Christian church.

None will deny, that lying and perjury are very gross and heinous sins, and (if known) very scandalous; and therefore it follows from what was observed before, that such sins, if lived in, though secretly, do disqualify persons for Christian sacraments in God's sight. But by our author's own account, all unsanctified men that partake of the Lord's supper, live in lying and perjury, and go on to renew these crimes continually; since while they continue ungodly men, they live in a constant violation of their promise and oath. For Mr. W. often lays it down, that all who enter into covenant with God, promise spiritual duties, such as repentance, faith, love, &c. And that they promise to perform these henceforward, even from the present moment, unto the end of life; (see p. 25. *c. e.* 26. *a.* 28. *a. c* 76. *a. b.*) and that they not only promise, but swear to do this. (p. 18. *d.* 100. *c.* 101. *a.* 129. *a.* 130. *c.* 140. *b.*) But for a man to violate the promises he makes in covenanting with God, Mr. W. once and again speaks of it as lying. (p. 24. *d. e.* p. 130. *c.*) And if so, doubtless their breaking the oath they swear to God, is perjury.—Now lying to men is bad; but lying to God is worse. (Acts v. 4.) And without doubt, perjury towards God is the worst sort of perjury But if unsanctified men, when they entered into covenant with God, promised and swore, that they would immediately thenceforward accept of Christ as their Saviour, and love him, and live to him; then while they continue in a wilful rejection of him, (which according to Mr. W. all unregenerate men do,) they live continually in the violation of their promise and oath.*

* Here I would observe, that not only in the general do unsanctified men, notwithstanding their moral sincerity, thus live in the most heinous wickedness; but particularly according to Mr. W.'s own doctrine, their very attendance on the outward ordinances and duties of worship, is the vilest, most flagrant, and abominable impiety. In his sermons on Christ a King and Witness, (p. 77, 78.) he says, "If a man could perform all the outward acts of worship and obedience, which the Bible requires, from the beginning to the end of it, and not do them from faith in Christ and love to God, and not express by them the thoughts, desires, and actings of his soul: they would be so far from being that obedience which Christ requires, that they would be a mocking of God and hateful to him. These outward acts ought to be no other, and in religion are designed to stand for nothing else, but to be representations of a man's soul, and the acts of that. And when they are not so, they are in their own nature a lie, and false pretence of something within, which is not there: Therefore the Lord abhors them, and reckons these false pretences the vilest wickedness.——Now when a man performs all outward

I would observe one thing further under this head, viz. That ungodly men which live under the gospel, notwithstanding any moral sincerity they may have, are worse, and more provoking enemies to God, than the very Heathen, who never sinned against gospel-light and mercy. This is very manifest by the scriptures, particularly Matt. x. 13, 14. Amos iii. 2. Rom. ii. 9. 2 Pet. ii. 21. Rev. iii. 15, 16.

I had suggested, concerning Mr. Stoddard's doctrine of admitting more unconverted than converted by attending Christ's rule, that this supposes it to be the case of the members of the visible church, that the greater part of them are more provoking enemies to God than most of the Heathen. Mr. W. represents himself as greatly alarmed at this: He calls it an extraordinary passage, and puts five questions about it to my serious consideration. (p. 72, 73.) The first and chief question is this: "Did Mr. S. ever say in the Appeal, or any where else, of most of our fellow-worshippers at the sacrament, that we have no reason to think concerning them, but that they are more provoking enemies to the Lord, whom Christians love and adore, than most of the very Heathen?" His three next questions are to represent the heinousness of such supposed ill treatment of Mr. S.—And I think will be sufficiently answered, by what I shall offer in reply to the first.

I will tell him what Mr. S. said. Speaking to such as do not come to Christ, living under the gospel, he said, (Safety of App. p. 234, 235.) "You may not think to escape as the Heathen do: Your load will be heavier, and your fire will be hotter, and your judgment sorer, than the judgment of other men God will proportion every man's misery to his iniquity. And as you have enjoyed greater light and love, so you must expect more amazing and exquisite wrath, than other men. Conscience has more to accuse you of and condemn you for,

obedience and worship, but it does not come from his heart, he practically denies the omniscience of Christ, while he puts before him a shew and pretence of something for the reality; and so he belies his own profession.—And all this, be it more or less, whatever it pretends to be of religion, instead of being that which Christ requires, is entirely different from it, yea, infinitely contrary to it. And these same actions, which when they are the language of the heart, and flow from it, are pleasing and acceptable to God and Jesus Christ, are true obedience to him; when they do not, are reckoned the most flagrant and abominable impiety, and threatened with the severest damnation of hell."——Now, who can believe, that God has, by his own holy institution, made that sort of sincerity, which is nothing better than what is consistent with such a lying, vile, abominable, flagrantly wicked pretence and shew of religion as this, the very thing that gives a right, even in his sight, to Christian sacraments?

I might here also observe, that if moral sincerity or common grace gives a right to sacraments in the sight of God, then that which (according to Mr. S—d's doctrine before observed) is a spirit of lust, that which is contrary to, and at war with, and would destroy saving grace, is a thing which gives a right in the sight of God to Christian sacraments.

and so has God: And you will sink down deeper into hell, than other men. You are treasuring up a greater measure of wrath, than others, against the day of wrath. You will wish you had lived in the darkest corners of the earth among Scythians and barbarians."

And Mr. W. must allow me to remind him of what another divine has said, and that is himself. In his sermon on Isa. xlv. 11. (p. 25, 26.) he says, "It is to be feared, there are great numbers here present, that are in an unconverted, unrenewed, unpardoned state; strangers from God, and enemies to him. Yet you now look with great pity and compassion on that poor captive, for whom we have now been offering up our earnest prayers,* who has been so long in a pitiable and sorrowful condition, and who is now in the thickness of *popish* darkness and superstition.—If you are out of Christ, and destitute of true faith in him, if your natures remain unrenewed and unsanctified, what is your state better than hers, which looks so sorrowful and distressing? Rather, is it not worse? When you consider, that in the fulness of the means of grace which you have enjoyed all your days, you are as far from any saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, as those who have lived in the dregs and abyss of popish ignorance, and know not what to believe, but what the church, that is, Antichrist, tells them. If you die thus, your misery will be aggravated inconceivably beyond theirs: Which Christ has plainly enough shewn us, when he upbraided the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, and tells them how much in the comparison they fall below Tyre and Sidon," (heathen cities, notorious for luxury, debauchery, and the grossest idolatry,) "and Sodom; for whom it should be more tolerable, than for them."

The same author says also, even in the book under consideration, (p. 86. "That the unbelief and impieties of visible saints, is what they will be punished for above all men in the world."

And now, I think it may be proper for Mr. W. himself to answer his 5th question, which he puts to my serious consideration, viz. "What honour is it to our Lord Jesus Christ to treat visible saints in such a manner, when at the same time it is his revealed will they should be outwardly treated as visible saints?"*

* Mrs. Eunice Williams, brought up in Canada, among the Caghnawaga Indians, sister to the then pastor of the church in Mansfield, where this sermon was preached, upon a day of prayer kept on her account; she being then in that place on a visit.

SECT. IX.

A view of what Mr. W. says concerning the public *covenanting of professors.*

1. Mr. W. often speaks with contempt, of my supposing it to be a duty required of such as come to sacraments, that they should explicitly own the covenant, and disputes largely against it. (p. 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, and many other places.) He says concerning me, (p. 22. *a. b.*) "It is very unhappy, that this good gentleman should use the scripture in such a manner, to prove a divine institution which never had an existence; and after all that is said is but a mere imagination and chimera; it being evident, there was never any such divine institution for the church under the Old Testament, binding particular persons publicly and explicitly to own the covenant, in order to their enjoying the outward ordinances of it." However, it falls out something happily for me, that I am not quite alone in the chimera, but have Mr. W. himself to join me in it; who abundantly asserts the same thing, (p. 5. *c.* p. 8. *a* p. 9. *b. c.* and many other places,) who uses the scripture in the same manner, and supposes the same divine institution and who (in p. 5. *b. c.* of the treatise in hand,) having stated the following inquiry, "What is that evidence, which by *divine appointment* the church is to have, of the saintship of those who are admitted to the outward privileges of the covenant of grace?" makes this answer to it: "The *scripture* has determined the matter thus, that the open profession and declaration of a *person's* believing in Christ,—and an hearty consent to the terms of the covenant of grace, and engagement on his part to fulfil it," &c. "is the sole and entire ground of that public judgment, which the church is to make of the real saintship of professors." It is manifest he cannot intend merely that they should be the posterity of such as thus owned the covenant, or declared their consent to it, and so are looked upon as those that owned the covenant in their ancestors, at the beginning of the covenant line (though sometimes he seems to suppose this is all that is necessary, as I shall take particular notice by and by:) For here he expressly speaks of a personal owning the covenant, or the open profession and declaration of a *person's* consent to the covenant. And thus he often speaks of the same matter, in like manner, as a personal thing, or what is done by the person judged of, and received. (See p. 10. *c. d.* 31. *e.* 32. *e.* 33. *a.* 34. *b. c.* 73. *b.* 84. *a.* 139. *a.*) And in the second page of his preface, he declares himself fully established

in Mr. S—d's doctrine concerning this affair of qualifications for the Lord's supper; who expressly declared it to be his judgment, that "It is requisite, that persons be not admitted unto communion in the Lord's supper, without making a *personal* and public profession of their faith and repentance." (Appeal, p. 93, 94.)

And as Mr. W. holds, that there must be a public personal owning of the covenant; so he also maintains, that this profession must be explicit or express. He says, (p. 20. *d. e.*) "Since we have no direction in the Bible, at what time nor in what manner any personal explicit covenanting should be performed,—it appears plain to a demonstration, that the people knew nothing of any such institution; as I suppose, the Christian church never did, till Mr. Edwards discovered it." But if I was the first discoverer, he should have owned, that since I have discovered it, he himself, and all my opposers, have seen cause to follow me, and receive my discovery. For so the case seems to be, if he gives us a true account (in p. 132. *b.*) where he rejects with indignation, the imputation of any other opinion. "How often (says he) has Mr. Edwards said, none but visible saints are to be admitted. Do not *all* Mr. Edwards's *opposers* say, that *no man* is to be admitted, who does not profess his hearty belief of the gospel, and the earnest and sincere purpose of his heart, so far as he knows it, to obey all God's commands, and keep his *covenant? none*, who do not make as full and *express* a profession as the Israelites did, or was ever required by Christ or his apostles, in any instances that can be produced in the Bible, of bodies of men or particular persons' admission into visible covenant with God? He had before spoken of the *words* which the Israelites used in their entering into covenant with God, (p. 5. *d.*) which must refer to their entering into covenant in the wilderness; for we have no account of any words at all used by that nation, at their entering into covenant, if not there. And this he sometimes speaks of as the covenant they made, when God took them into covenant, (p. 8. *d.* 36. *d. e.* 37. *a. b.*) And (p. 20.) he allows that to be an instance of explicit covenanting: But ridicules my pretending to shew, that explicit covenanting was a divine institution for all; when he says, we have an account of but four instances of any explicit covenanting with God by the Jews, and those on most extraordinary occasions, and by the body of the people. But what matter is it, whether there were four, or but two, or only that one instance in the wilderness? when he himself with such earnestness declares, that all my opposers hold every man must make as full and express a profession of the covenant as ever the Israelites did, or was ever required, in any instance that can be produced in the Bible, whether of bodies of men or

particular persons' admission, &c. If this be so, and what he said before be also true, then all Israel, even every individual person among them, that ever was admitted to the privileges of the church, throughout all their generations, by his own confession and assertion, did personally make as explicit a profession of the covenant, as the body of the people did in that instance in the wilderness. And not only so, but the same must every individual person do, that ever comes to sacraments, through all ages to the end of the world.—Thus Mr. W. fights hard to beat down himself. But I will not say in his own language, that in so doing he fights hard to beat down a poor man of straw.

If any should say, that Mr. W. when speaking of an express profession, does not mean a profession in words, but only in actions; such as an outward attendance on ordinances and duties of worship: I answer, if such actions are a profession, yet certainly they are not an express profession; they are no more than an implicit profession. And, besides, it is very plain, the profession he speaks of is a profession in words. Thus, (p. 36. *b.*) when describing the profession which ought to be made, he says, "It is in as strong *words*, as were used by any whom the apostles admitted." And elsewhere (as was before noted) he often insists, that a profession should be made in *words* without any discrimination as to their meaning. Which shews, it is a profession in words that he designs. And although (p. 104. *c.*) he speaks of a performance of the outward duties of morality and worship, as the only way that God ever appointed of making real saintship visible: Yet this is only another instance of his great inconsistence with himself; as appears by what has already been observed, and appears further by this, that when he speaks of a profession of consent to the terms of the covenant, &c. he often speaks of it as a profession which ought to be made in order to admission to these ordinances. (p. 5. *b. c.* 10. *a.* 35. *c.* 36. *a. b. c.* 132. *b.* and other places.) If so, then how can the attendance itself, on these ordinances of worship, be all the profession which is to be made? Must men first come to ordinances, in order to admission to ordinances? And moreover, Mr. W. himself distinguishes between engaging and swearing to keep covenant in the public profession, and attending on the ordinances and duties of worship, which he speaks of as belonging to the fulfilment of the engagement and oath. (p. 130.) And lastly I would observe, though it could be consistently made out, (which it never can,) that Mr. W. does not mean a professing in words, it would be nothing to the purpose. If it be in words, or in other signs which are equivalent to words, and which are a full and express profession, (as Mr. W. says,) it is exactly the same thing as to my purpose, and the consequence of the argument, which was, that real godliness must be profess-

ed. And indeed this very thing which I endeavoured to prove by all that I said on this head, is expressly again and again allowed by Mr. W. Yet he makes a great ado, as if there was a vast difference between him and me in this affair of public covenanting with God; and as though my notions of it were very singular, absurd, and mischievous.

II. Mr. W. says a great deal in opposition to me, to shew that swearing by God's name, swearing to the Lord, and the like, do not mean covenanting with God: But yet (in p. 18.) in the midst of his earnest dispute against it, he owns it.—I mentioned several prophecies, referring to the Gentile converts in the days of the gospel, which foretell that they should swear by God's name, swear to the Lord of hosts, &c. as a prediction of the Gentiles publicly covenanting with God; using that as one thing which confirmed, that this was commonly the meaning of such phrases in the Old Testament. But Mr. W. despises my interpretation of these prophecies, and my argument from them. Nevertheless, in his reply, he owns the very thing: He in effect owns, that entering into covenant, and owning the covenant, is what is meant by these prophecies; mentioning this, plainly with approbation, as the universal sense of Protestant commentators. His words are, (p. 18. *d. e.*) "As to all these prophecies, which Mr. Edwards has quoted, referring to the Gentiles, and their swearing by the name of the Lord, the sense of Protestant commentators upon them, I think, universally is, that when the Gentiles in God's appointed time should be brought into covenant with God, it should be as the Jews were, by being persuaded to consent to the terms of the covenant of grace, and engaging themselves to God, to be faithful to him, and keep covenant with him. He who heartily consents to the terms of the covenant of grace, gives up himself to the Lord, gives the hand to the Lord, engages to own and serve him; which is the thing signified in all those metaphorical phrases, which describe or point out this event, in the Old Testament language."

III. Mr. W. in these last cited words, explains the phrase of giving the hand to the Lord, as signifying engaging themselves to God in covenant, and consenting to the terms of the covenant; and yet in the next page but two, he contemns and utterly disallows my interpreting the same phrase in the same manner. Mr. W. says, (p. 21. *c.*) "As to the words of Hezekiah, when he called the Israelites to the passover, bidding them yield or give the hand to the Lord; and in Ezra, they gave the hand to put away their wives; which he thinks to be an Hebrew phrase for entering into covenant, it carries its own confutation with it."

IV. Mr. W. often speaks of the professions made by the ancient Israelites and Jewish Christians, when they entered into

covenant, and were admitted into the church. Whereas, according to the doctrine of the same author, in the same book, we have no account of any profession made by either, on any such occasion. For he insists, that the children of such as are in covenant, are born in covenant; and are not admitted into covenant; any otherwise than as they were seminally in their ancestors; and that the profession of their ancestors, at the head of the covenant line, is that individual profession, which brings them into covenant. His words are, (p. 135. *e.* p. 136. *a. b. c.*) "It is one and the same individual profession and engagement, which brings them and their children into covenant. And if there is one instance in the Bible, where God ever took any man into covenant, and not his children at the same time, I should be glad to see it. It is by virtue of their being in covenant, that they have a right to the seals. And if these children are not cast out of covenant by God, their children have as good a right to the seals as they had. It is God's will, that his mark and seal should be set upon them, *and their children, and their children for ever*, till God cast them out of covenant. It is certain they have an interest in the covenant, and they have a right to the privileges of the covenant so long as they remain in covenant; and that is, till God cuts them off, and casts them out."

And accordingly he supposes, that John the Baptist never inquired into the doctrinal knowledge of those he baptized, because they were already in covenant with God, and members of his visible church, and not yet turned out: And he suggests, that John knew many of them not to be of a good moral character. (p. 98. So he largely insists, that the three thousand Jews and proselytes that the apostles baptized, (Acts ii.) were not taken into covenant, but only continued in covenant. (p. 46, 47.) So he supposes the Eunuch, before Philip baptized him, was a member of the church, and in covenant with God. (p. 50.) Though he inconsistently mentions those same persons in the 2nd of Acts, and the Eunuch, as admitted into the church by the Apostles, and primitive ministers. (p. 9. *e.* p. 10. *a.* p. 59. *a.*) And so (p. 8. *d.* p. 26. *a.*) he mentions God's taking all Israel into covenant: He mentions the profession which the Israelites made, (p. 25. *e.*) and (p. 5. *d.*) he speaks of the words which the Israelites used, in their entering into covenant with God. And (p. 36. *d. e.* p. 37. *a. b.*) he speaks of their profession in Moses' time, which God trusted so far as to admit them into covenant. Whereas indeed, according to Mr. W. they were not taken in, nor did they enter into covenant, neither in the plains of Moab, nor at Mount Sinai. He says expressly, that they were in covenant before that time, when in Egypt, being taken in their ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. (p. 91. *b.*) But then we read of no words that these Patriarchs used at their entering into cove-

nant.—And it will undoubtedly follow, on Mr. W.'s principles, that we must go further back still for Israel's being taken into covenant; we must go up even to Adam himself, the first father of mankind, who was visibly in covenant, and so his posterity, in the line of Noah's ancestors, without the line being broken by a visible cutting off, and casting out by God, as we have all reason to suppose. And after the flood, we have reason to think, God had a covenant-race continued in Shem's posterity, especially in the line of Abraham's ancestors. And though Terah, Abraham's father, was tainted with the then prevailing idolatry; yet there is no appearance of the line being then cut off, in the way Mr. W. speaks of, by God's visibly casting him out. On the contrary, God took a special fatherly care of him and his children, in bringing them from Ur of the Chaldees, the land of graven images, to Haran. (Gen. xi. 31.) And God is called the God of the father of Abraham and Nahor, that is, the God of Terah. (Gen xxxi. 53.) And if it be said, that in Abraham began a new dispensation of the covenant; so that Abraham might properly on that account be said to be taken into covenant, as though his ancestors had not been in covenant: I answer, The alteration of the dispensation was in no measure so great as that after Christ's resurrection and ascension; and yet Mr. W. will not allow, that the Jewish converts, received. (Acts ii.) on this new dispensation, were any more than continued in covenant, and in the church. So that, according to Mr. W.'s scheme, it must be Adam's profession of religion, that was the individual profession which made all his posterity, in the line of the church, even to the apostles' days, visible saints, or, (as he himself explains visible saintship,) such as we have rational ground to think are real saints, possessed of gospel-holiness; and on that account have a right to sacraments. For so he says it is with the children of them that are in covenant, and their children, and their children for ever, till cut off and cast out by God.

So that now we have the scheme in a true view of it.—The Pharisees and Sadducees that John baptized, whom Mr. W. supposes John knew to be not of a good moral character, and whose doctrinal knowledge he did not inquire into before he baptized them; because they had before been admitted in their ancestors; even these were visible saints, and such as John had rational ground to think had sufficient doctrinal knowledge and were orthodox and real saints, having moral evidence that they had gospel-holiness, because Adam their original ancestor made a profession of religion, in words of double meaning, without any marks of distinction or discrimination by which any might know their meaning.

And if we should go back no further than Abraham, it

would not much mend the matter; supposing the case had been so, that we had the words of both Abraham's and Adam's profession written down in our Bibles: whereas, we have neither; no, nor have we the words of the profession of any one person, either in the Old Testament or New, at their being taken into the church, if the things which Mr. W. says are true; though he speaks so often of professions, and words of professions, and declarations, made on such occasions, as if we had an express account of them in scripture.

V. As our author abundantly maintains, that unsanctified men in covenanting with God, may and do promise the exercise of saving faith, repentance, love, &c.; so he holds, that they promise to begin the exercise of these graces immediately, from this moment, and to live in them from henceforth. (p. 25. *c. e.* and 29. *a.* and 28. *a. c.* 76. *a. b.* 6.)

Now I desire this matter may be looked into, and thoroughly examined. Not only the holy scriptures, and agreeable to them, Mr. Stoddard, and sound divines in general teach us, but Mr. W. himself maintains, that men who are unsanctified do for the present refuse and oppose these things. In a fore-cited place of his sermon on Isaiah xlv. 11. our author says, that unregenerate and unsanctified men oppose all means for bringing them to these things, are willingly without them, and labour to find out all manner of difficulties and hindrances in the way of them; and if they pray for them, do not desire they should come yet, but would stay a while longer. Now, how is this consistent with such persons promising, with any sincerity at all, that they will comply with and perform these things immediately, from henceforth, without staying one moment longer? If God calls a man this moment to yield his whole heart to him in faith, love and new obedience; and if he in answer to the call solemnly promises and swears* to God, that he will immediately comply with the call, without the least delay, and does it with any sincerity, how does he now willingly refuse, oppose, and struggle against it, as choosing to stay a while longer?

Besides, such promises and oaths of unregenerate men must not only be contrary to sincerity, but very presumptuous upon these two accounts. (1.) Because herein they take an oath to the Most High, which, it is ten thousand to one they will break as soon as the words are out of their mouths, by continuing still unconverted; yea, an oath which they are breaking even while they are uttering it. And what folly and wickedness is it for men to take such oaths; and how contrary to the counsel given by the wise man, in Eccl. v. 2—6. And to what purpose should

* It must be observed, that Mr. W. often speaks of the promise which an unregenerate man makes in covenanting with God, as his oath. (p. 18. *d.* p. 100. *b.* 101. *a.* p. 129. *a.* p. 130. *c.* p. 143. *b.*)

ungodly men be encouraged to utter such promises and oaths before the church, for the church's acceptance; which are so far from being worthy to be credited, or a fulfilment of them to be expected, that it is many thousands, and perhaps millions of times more likely to be otherwise. That is, it is so much more likely they will not be converted the very next moment. (2.) When an unconverted man makes such a promise, he promises what he has not to give, or that for which he has no sufficiency. There is indeed a sufficiency in God to enable him; but he has no claim to it. For God's helping a man savingly to believe in Christ is a saving blessing: And Mr. W. himself owns, that a man cannot by promise claim any saving blessings, till he has fulfilled the conditions of the covenant of grace. (p. 22. *e.* and 28. *e.*) So that in vain it is said by Mr. W. (p. 27. *e.*) "I pray that it may be thoroughly considered what is propounded in the covenant of grace, and on what stock a man is to finish." Meaning (as appears by the sequel,) the stock of God's sufficiency. To what purpose is this said? When the covenant of grace promises or makes over no such stock to him who has no interest in the promises of it, as having not yet complied with the condition of its promises. Nor does an unconverted man promise any thing in a humble dependence on that stock; no such men do lay hold on God's strength, or trust in God's sufficiency. For this is a discriminating mark of a true saint; as our author himself observes, in that fore-cited passage in his Sermons on *Christ a King and Witness*, (p. 19. *c.*)

I would here take notice of it as remarkable, that though Mr. W. had owned that a natural man can claim no saving blessings by God's promise, yet to help out his scheme of a natural man engaging and promising, even with an oath, the exercises of saving grace, he, (in p. 27, 28. especially p. 28. *e.*) speaking of the great encouragement on which unsanctified men can promise these things, supposes God has given such encouragement to them who promise and engage themselves to God, with that degree of earnestness and sincerity which he often speaks of as requisite to communion, that we have reason to determine that God never will fail of bestowing on them saving grace; so that they shall fulfil their promises. I say, he supposes that we have reason to determine this, because he himself determines it. His words are these:—"Though there be no promise of saving good, exclusive of faith, yet there being a command and encouragement, there are suitable springs of his endeavour and hope, in his engaging himself to God and casting himself upon his mercy with all the earnestness and sincerity he can. God *never* will be worse than his encouragement, nor do less than he has encouraged; and he has said, To him that hath shall be given." Now if this be so, and if this will make it

out, that an unconverted man who is morally sincere may reasonably, on this encouragement, promise immediately to believe and repent, though this be not in his own power; then it will follow, that whenever an unconverted man covenants, with such moral sincerity as gives a lawful right to sacraments, God *never* will fail of giving him converting grace that moment, to enable him from thenceforward to believe and repent, as he promises. And if this be so, and none may lawfully covenant with God without moral sincerity, (as Mr. W. also says,) then it will follow, that never any one person comes, nor can come lawfully to the Lord's supper, in an unconverted state; because when they enter into covenant lawfully, (supposing them not converted before,) God always converts them in the moment of their covenanting, before they come to the Lord's table. And if so, what is become of all this grand dispute about the lawfulness of persons coming to the Lord's table, who have not converting grace?

VI. Mr. W. greatly misrepresents me from time to time, as though I had asserted, that it is impossible for an unsanctified man to enter into covenant with God; and that those who were unsanctified among the Israelites, did not enter into covenant with God; that the pretended covenanting of such is not covenanting, but only lying, wilful lying; and that no natural man can own the covenant, but that he certainly lies, knows he lies, and designedly lies, in all these things, when he says them. (p. 26. *d.* 22. *d.* 24. *d*, 31. *a. b. c.* 21. *c.*) Whereas, I never said, nor supposed any such thing. I never doubted but that multitudes of unsanctified persons, and in all ages of the Christian church, and in this age, and here in New England, have entered visibly, and in profession, into the covenant of grace, and have owned that covenant, and promised a compliance with all the duties of it without known or wilful lying; for this reason, because they were deceived, and did not know their own hearts: And that they (however deceived) were under the obligations of the covenant, and bound by their engagements and promises. And that in that sense, they were God's covenant people that by their own binding act they were engaged to God in covenant; though such an act, performed without habitual holiness, be an unlawful one. If a thing be externally devoted to God, by doing what ought not to have been done, the thing devoted may by that act, be the Lord's: as it was with the censers of Korah and his company. (Num. xvi. 37, 38.)

What I asserted was, that none could profess a compliance with the covenant of grace, and avouch *Jehovah* to be their God, and Christ to be their Saviour; i. e. that they are so by their own act and choice, and yet love the world more than *Jeho-*

vah, without lying, or being deceived.* And that he who is wholly under the power of a carnal mind, which is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be, cannot promise to love God with all his heart and with all his soul, without either great deceit or the most manifest and palpable absurdity. Inasmuch, as promising supposes the person to be conscious to himself, or persuaded of himself, that he has such a heart in him; because his lips pretend to declare his heart, and the nature of a promise implies real intention, will, and compliance of heart.† And what can be more evident, than these propositions? Surely they that reject the covenant of grace in their hearts, (as Mr. W. owns all unsanctified men do,) cannot own it with their lips, without either deceiving or being deceived. Words cannot be a true signification of more than is in the mind. Inward covenanting, as Mr. S. taught, is by an act of saving faith. (Safety of Ap. p. 85. *e.* 86. *a.*) And outward covenanting is an expression of inward covenanting; therefore, if it be not attended with inward covenanting, it is a false expression. And Mr. W. in effect owns the same thing; for he says, (p. 21. *b.*) "That there is no doubt they who are wilful obstinate sinners, deal deceitfully and falsely when they pretend to covenant with God." But so do all unregenerate sinners under the gospel, according to Mr. Stoddard and his own doctrine. And thus the very point, about which he contests so earnestly and so long, and with so many great words, is in the midst of it all, given up fully, by his own concession.

VII. Mr. W. is greatly displeased with my saying (as above) that none who are under the power of a carnal mind can visibly own the covenant, without lying or being deceived, &c. And he finds great fault with my gloss on Psal. lxxviii. 36, 37. "They did flatter him with their mouth, and lied to him with their tongue:" which I interpret, as though they lied in pretending that respect to God, which indeed they had not. (p. 35. *a.* of my Inquiry.) But he insists, that what is meant is only their lying in breaking their promise. (p. 24. *e.*) And he insists upon it (as has been observed already) that natural men may covenant with God and speak true. But it seems he has wonderfully changed his mind of late; for a little while ago he declared elsewhere for the very same things which he here inveighs against, and spoke of natural men's profession and pretence of respect to God, as being actually a *lie in its own nature;* and not only becoming so by their breaking covenant afterwards. Particularly, it is remarkable, he has thus interpreted this very text now in dispute. In his sermons on *Christ a King and Witness*, speaking of the outward acts of worship done by those that do

* See my Inquiry, p. 33, 34. † Ibid. p. 37, 38.

not love God, nor believe in Christ, he expressly says, (p. 77.) "They are in their own nature a *lie*; a false pretence of something within, that is not there.—See (says Mr. W.) this interpretation of it, in Psal. lxxviii. 34—37. They did flatter him with their mouths; they lied to him with their tongues," &c.—(Ibid. p. 74. *b. e.*) "Christ's visible church are such as visibly and outwardly profess to be his subjects, and act outwardly as if they believed on him. But these outward acts in themselves are not that religion and obedience which Christ requires; nay, of themselves, they have no religion in them; and Christ has nothing to do with them, but as they are the fruits and expressions of the heart, as they are the language and index of the mind and conscience, and outward declarations of the inward frame, temper, and actings of the soul. If they are not so, they are so far from having any religion in them, that they are hateful to him, being only the visible resemblance, the pretence and feigning of religion; i. e. they are mockery, hypocrisy, *falsehood and lies;* and belong not to the kingdom of Christ, but of the devil."—Let the reader now compare this with my gloss on the text.

Thus I have considered the various parts and principles of Mr. W.'s scheme, which are the foundations on which he builds all his superstructure, and the ground on which he proceeds in all his reasonings, through his book; and many particulars in his answers and arguments have been already considered.—Mr. W. says thus, (p. 135. *a.*) "I own that at present I have no more expectation to see the scheme which Mr. Edwards aims to establish, defended upon Calvinistic principles, than the doctrine of transubstantiation." On which I shall only say, it might perhaps be thought very impertinent in me, to tell my readers what I do, or what I do not expect, concerning his scheme. Every reader, that has reason enough of his own not to take the big words and confident speeches of others for demonstration, is now left to judge for himself, whose scheme is most akin to the doctrine of transubstantiation, for inconsistence and self-contradiction. Nevertheless, I will proceed to consider our author's reasonings a little more particularly, in the ensuing part.

PART III.

CONTAINING SOME REMARKS OF MR. WILLIAM'S EXCEPTIONABLE WAY OF REASONING, IN SUPPORT OF HIS OWN SCHEME, AND IN OPPOSITION TO THE CONTRARY PRINCIPLES.

SECT. I.

General observations upon his way of arguing, and answering arguments; with some instances of the first method excepted against.

MR. W. endeavours to support his own opinion, and to confute the book he pretends to answer, by the following methods.

1. By frequently misrepresenting what I say, and then disputing or exclaiming against what he wrongfully charges as mine.

2. By misrepresenting what others say in their writings, whose opinions he pretends to espouse.

3. By seeming to oppose and confute arguments, and yet only saying things which have no reference at all to them, but relate entirely to other matters, that are altogether foreign to the argument in hand.

4. By advancing new and extraordinary notions; which are both manifestly contrary to truth, and also contrary to the common apprehensions of the Christian church in all ages.

5. By making use of peremptory and confident assertions, instead of arguments.

6. By using great exclamation, in the room of arguing; as though he would amuse and alarm his readers, and excite terror in them, instead of rational conviction.

7. By wholly overlooking arguments, and not answering at all; pretending, that there is no argument, nothing to answer; when the case is manifestly far otherwise.

8. By frequently turning off an argument with this reflec-

tion, that it is begging the question; when there is not the least shew or pretext for it.

9. By very frequently begging the question himself, or doing that which is equivalent.

10. By often alleging and insisting on things in which he is inconsistent with himself.

As to the first of these methods used by Mr. W. *i. e.* his misrepresenting what I say, and then disputing or exclaiming against what he injuriously charges as mine, many instances have been already observed: I now would take notice of some other instances.

In p. 15. *c.* he charges me with "affirming vehemently, in a number of repetitions, that the doctrine taught is, that no manner of pretence to any visible holiness is made or designed to be made." These he cites as my words, marking them with notes of quotation. Whereas I never said, or thought any such thing, but the contrary. I knew, that those whose doctrine I opposed, declared that visible holiness was necessary: And take particular notice of it, (p. 8.) where I say, "It is granted on all hands, that none ought to be admitted, as members of the visible church of Christ, but visible saints:" and argue on this supposition for fifteen pages together, in that same part of my book where Mr. W. charges me with asserting the contrary. What I say is, that people are taught, that they come into the church without any pretence to sanctifying grace, (p. 15. *d.*) I do not say, without a pretence to visible holiness. Thus Mr. W alters my words, to make them speak something not only diverse, but contrary to what I do say, and say very often; and so takes occasion, or rather makes an occasion, to charge me before the world, with telling a manifest untruth. (p. 15. *d.*)

Again, Mr. W. in answering my argument concerning brotherly love, (p. 70. *e.* 71. *a.*) represents me as arguing, "That in the exercise of Christian love described in the gospel, there is such an union of hearts, as there cannot be of a saint to an unsanctified man." Which is a thing I never said, and is quite contrary to the sentiments which I have abundantly declared. I indeed speak of that brotherly love, as what cannot be of a saint to one that is not apprehended and judged to be sanctified. But that notion of a peculiar love, which cannot be to an unsanctified man—or without the reality of holiness in the person beloved—is what I ever abhorred, and have borne a most loud and open and large testimony against, again and again, from the press,* and did so in the preface to that very book which Mr. W. writes against.

* Marks of a Work of the True Spirit, p. 101, 102, 103, 104.—Thoughts on the Revival of Religion, from p. 292—303.—Nature of Religious Affections, p. 85—87. Preface to Inquiry into Qualifications for communion, p. 5.

In p. 74. *a. b.* Mr. W. represents me as supposing, that in the sacrament of the Lord's supper, both the covenanting parties, viz. Christ and the communicant, seal to the truth of the communicant's faith; or that both seal to this as true, that the communicant does receive Christ. Whereas, by me, no such thing was ever thought; nor is any thing said that has such an aspect. What I say, is very plain and express, (p. 75.) "That Christ by his minister professes his part of the covenant, presents himself, and professes the willingness of his heart to be their's who receive him. That on the other hand, the communicant, in receiving the offered symbols, professes his part in the covenant, and the willingness of his heart to receive Christ who is offered." How different is this from both parties sealing to the truth of the communicant's faith.

In p. 76, 77, and 80. he greatly misrepresents my argument from 1 Cor. xi. 28. Let a man examine himself, &c. as though I supposed, the Greek word translated *examine*, must necessarily imply an examination to approbation; that it signifies to approve; and that a man's examination must mean his approving himself to himself to be sanctified. This representation he makes over and over, and builds his answer to the argument upon it; and in opposition to this he says, (p. 77. *c.*) "Wherever the word means to examine to approbation, it is not used in its natural sense, but metonymically." Whereas, there is not the least foundation for such a representation: No such thing is said or suggested by me, as if I supposed that the meaning of the word is to approve or to examine to approbation. What I say is, that it properly signifies proving or trying a thing, whether it be true and of the right sort. (p. 77. *d.*) And in the same place, I expressly speak of the word (in the manner Mr. W. does,) as not used in its natural sense, but metonymically, when it is used to signify approve. So that Mr. W.'s representation is not only diverse from, but contrary to what I say. Indeed I suppose (as well I may) that when the apostle directs persons to try themselves with respect to their qualifications for the Lord's supper, he would not have them come, if upon trial they find themselves not qualified. But it would be ridiculous to say, that I therefore suppose the meaning of the word, *try* or *examine*, is to *approve*, when it is evident that the *trying* is only in order to knowing whether a thing is to be *approved* or *disapproved*.

In p. 98. *b.* on the argument from John's baptism, Mr. W. alters my words, bringing them the better to comport with the odious representation he had made of my opinion, viz. that I required giving an account of experiences, as a term of communion; he puts in words as mine, which are not mine, and distinguishes them with marks of quotation; charging me with representing it as "probable that John had as much time to

inquire into their experiences as into their doctrinal knowledge." Whereas, my words are these, (p. 101. *a.*) "He had as much opportunity to inquire into the credibility of their profession, as he had to inquire into their doctrinal knowledge and moral character."

In p. 118. *d.* (and to the like purpose, p. 134. *c.*) our author represents me, and others of my principles, as holding, "That the gospel does peremptorily sentence men to damnation for eating and drinking without sanctifying grace." But surely Mr. W. would have done well to have referred to the place in my Inquiry, where any thing is said that has such an appearance. For, I find nothing that I have said in that book, or any other writing of mine, about the gospel peremptorily sentencing such men to damnation, or signifying how far I thought they were exposed to damnation, or expressing my sentiments more or less about the matter.

In p. 130. *e.* and 131. *a*, Mr. W. says, "When one sees with what epithets of honour Mr. Edwards in some parts of his book has complimented Mr. Stoddard, it must look like a strange medley to tack to them;—That he was a weak beggar of his question; a supposer of what was to be proved; taking for granted the point in controversy; inconsistent with himself; ridiculously contradicting his own arguments." These expressions which Mr. W. speaks of as tacked to those honourable epithets, he represents as expressions which I had used concerning Mr. Stoddard. And his readers that have not consulted my book, will doubtless take it so from his manner of representation. Whereas, the truth is, no one of these expressions is used concerning Mr. S. any where in my book; nor is there one disrespectful word spoken of him there. All the ground Mr. W. had to make such a representation, was, that in answering arguments against my opinion, I endeavoured to shew them to be weak, (though I do not find that I used that epithet,) and certainly for one to pretend to answer arguments, and yet allow them to be strong, would be to shew himself to be very weak. In answering some of these arguments, and endeavouring to shew wherein the inconclusiveness of them lay, I have sometimes taken notice that the defect lay in what is called begging the question, or supposing the thing to be proved. And if I had said so concerning Mr. S—d's arguments, speaking of them as his, I do not know why it should be represented as any personal reflection, or unhandsome dishonourable treatment of him. Every inconclusive argument is weak; and the business of a disputant is to shew wherein the weakness lies; But to speak of arguments as weak, is not to call men weak.—— All the ground Mr. W. has to speak of me as saying, that Mr. S. ridiculously contradicted his own arguments, is, that (in p. 11.

citing some passages out of Mr. S—d's Appeal, I use these words: "But how he reconciled these passages with the rest of his treatise, I would modestly say, I must confess myself at a loss." And particularly I observed, that I could not see how they consist with what he says, p. 16; and so proceed to mention one thing which appears to me not well to consist with them. But certainly this is not indecently to reflect on Mr. S. any more than Mr. W. indecently reflects on the FIRST REFORMERS, in his answer to Mr. Croswell, (p. 74, 75.) where, speaking of their doctrine of a particular persuasion as of the essence of saving faith, he says, They are found inconsistent with themselves, and their doctrine lighter than vanity. And again, (p. 82.) If ever, (says Mr. W.) any men were confuted from their own concessions, these divines are. And more to the like purpose.—Which gives me a fair occasion to express the like wonder at him, as he does at me, (p. 131. *a.*) but I forbear personal reflections.

Mr. W. (in the same p. *d.*) has these words; "And to say, that all unsanctified men do profess and seal their consent to the covenant of grace in the Lord's supper, when they know at the same time they do not consent to it, nor have their heart at all in the affair,—is something worse than begging the question"—that is, as I suppose, (the same that he charged me with before,) telling a manifest untruth. By which he plainly suggests, that I have said thus. Whereas, I nowhere say, nor in any respect signify that I suppose, all unsanctified communicants do *know* that they do not consent to the covenant of grace. I never made any doubt, but that multitudes of unsanctified communicants are deceived, and think they do consent to it.

In p. 132. *d.* he says of me, "The author endeavours to shew, that the admitting unsanctified persons tends to the ruin and reproach of the Christian church; and to the ruin of the persons admitted." But how widely different is this from what I express in the place he refers to? (Inq. p. 121. *c.*) That which I say there, is, that "by express liberty given, to open the door to as many as please, of those who have no visibility of real saintship, and make no profession of it, nor pretension to it, is a method which tends to the ruin and great reproach of the Christian church, and also to the ruin of the persons admitted." I freely grant, and shew abundantly in my book, it is never to be expected, that all unsanctified men can be kept out, by the most exact attendance on the rules of Christ, by those that admit members.

In p. 136. *d.* Mr. W. wholly without grounds, speaks of me as representing, that "unconverted men make pretension to nothing but what God's enemies have, remaining in open and avowed rebellion against him." Whereas, I suppose that some

natural men do profess, and profess truly, many things, which those have not, who are open and avowed enemies of God. They may truly profess that sort of moral sincerity, in many things belonging to morality and religion, which avowed enemies have not: nor is there any sentence or word in my book, which implies or intimates the contrary.

In p. 141. *c. d.* Mr. W. evidently insinuates, that I am one of those who "If men live never so strictly conformable to the laws of the gospel, and never so diligently seek their own salvation, to outward appearance, yet do not stick to speak of them, and act openly towards them, as persons giving no more public evidence, that they are not the enemies of God and haters of Jesus Christ, than the very worst of the heathen." But surely every one that has read my book, every one that knows my constant conduct, and manner of preaching, as well as writing, and how much I have written, said, and done, against judging and censuring persons of an externally moral and religious behaviour, must know how injurious this representation of me is.

SECT. II.

Instances of the second thing mentioned as exceptionable in Mr. W.'s method of managing this controversy; viz. His misrepresenting what is said in the writings of others, that he supposes favour his opinion.

Perhaps instances enough of this have already been taken notice of; yet I would now mention some others.

In what he says in reply to my answer to the eighth objection, he says, (p. 108.) "Mr. Stoddard does not say, If sanctifying grace be necessary to a person's lawful partaking of the Lord's supper, then God would have given some certain rule, whereby those *who are to admit them*, may know whether they have such grace or not." Mr. W. there intimates (as the reader may see,) as if Mr. S. spake so, that it is to be understood disjunctively, meaning, he would either have given some certain rule to the church who admit them, or else to the persons themselves: so that by one means or other, the Lord's supper might be restrained to converted men. And he exclaims against me for representing as though Mr. Stoddard's argument were concerning a certain rule, whereby those who are to admit them, may know whether they have grace, (see the foregoing page,) and speaks of it as nothing akin to Mr. S.'s argument. Now let the reader take notice of Mr. S.'s words, and see whether his argument be not something akin to this. He says ex-

pressly, (Appeal, p. 75.) "God does not bind his *church* to impossibilities. If he had made such an ordinance, he would give gifts to his *church*, to distinguish sincere men from hypocrites, whereby the ordinance might have been attended.—The minor is also evident: He has given no such rule to his *church*, whereby it may be restrained to converted men. This appears, because by the rule that they are to go by, they are allowed *to give* the Lord's supper to many unconverted men. For all visible signs are common to men converted, and unconverted." So that Mr. S. in fact does say, If sanctifying grace be necessary to a person's lawful partaking of the Lord's supper, then God would have given some certain rule, whereby the church [those who are to admit them] may know, whether they have grace, or not. Though Mr. W. denies it, and says, this is nothing akin to Mr. S.'s argument; contrary to the plainest fact.

In p. 99, Mr. W. replying to my answer to the sixth objection, misrepresents Mr. Hudson, in the following passage. "This, (*i. e.* baptism,) says Mr. Hudson, makes them members of the body of Christ. And as for a particular explicit covenant, besides the general imposed on churches, I find no mention of it, no example, nor warrant for it in all the scripture."—Here Mr. W. is still manifestly endeavouring to discredit my doctrine of an explicit owning the covenant of grace; and he so manages and alters Mr. Hudson's words, as naturally leads the reader to suppose, that Mr. Hudson speaks against this: whereas, he says not a word about it. What Mr. H. speaks of, is not an explicit owning the covenant of grace, or baptismal covenant; but a particular church-covenant, by which a particular society bind themselves explicitly, one to another, jointly to carry on the public worship. Mr. Hudson's words are, (p. 19.) "I dare not make a particular explicit holy covenant to be the *form* of a *particular* church, as this description seemeth to do; because I find no mention of any such covenant, besides the general imposed on churches, nor example, nor warrant for it in all the scripture." And then afterwards Mr. Hudson says, "but it is the general covenant sealed by baptism, and not this, that makes them members of the body of Christ." Mr. W. by citing distant passages in Mr. Hudson, and joining them, in his own way, by particles and conjunctions, which Mr. Hudson does not use, and leaving out these words—To be the form of a particular church, as this description seemeth to do—quite blinds the mind of his reader, as to Mr. Hudson's true sense, which is nothing to Mr. W.'s purpose. Mr. Hudson says not a word here against, or about an express or explicit covenanting, or owning the covenant in my sense: but in other places, in the same book, he speaks of it, and for it, as necessary for all Christians. Thus, (p. 69. *b. c.*)

"There is one individual *express*, eternal covenant; not only on God's part—but also it is one external, visible covenant, on men's part: which all Christians, as Christians, enter into, by their *professed* acceptance, and *express* restipulation, and promised subjection and obedience; though not altogether in one place, or at one time." He speaks again to the same purpose, p. 100.

SECT. III.

Instances of the third *thing observed in Mr. W.'s manner of arguing, viz. His pretending to* oppose *and* answer *arguments, by saying things which have* no reference *to them, but relate to* other *matters, perfectly* foreign *to the subject of the argument.*

Such is his answer (p. 37, &c.) to my argument from Isai. lvi. Particularly from those words, 6, 7. Also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the Lord, to serve him, to love the name of the Lord, to be his servants—even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer, &c. For I say nothing under that argument, (as Mr. W. in his answer presumes,) which supposes any antithesis or opposition here between the state of the Gentiles and eunuchs under the Old Testament, and under the gospel, as to terms of acceptance with God: nor any opposition, as to a greater necessity of sanctifying grace, to the lawful partaking of ordinances, under the gospel, than under the law; as Mr. W. also supposes in his arguings on this head. But the opposition I speak of, as plainly pointing forth in the chapter, is this: That whereas under the law, not only piety of heart and practice were required, but something else, even soundness of body and circumcision, it is foretold, that under the gospel, piety of heart and practice only should be required; that although they were eunuchs or uncircumcised, yet if it appeared that they loved the name of the Lord, &c. they should be admitted.

So when I argued, that Christ, in the latter part of the seventh chapter of Matthew, representing the final issue of things, with regard to the visible church in general, speaks of all as those who had looked on themselves to be interested in him as their Lord and Saviour, and had an opinion of their good estate; though the hope of some was built on the sand, and others on a rock:—Mr. W. in his reply, (p. 40, 41.) entirely overlooks the argument, and talks about other things. He says,

Christ does not find fault with those that cried, Lord, Lord, for entering into covenant, but for not keeping covenant, (p. 41. *b.*) Here he runs back to another thing, relating to another argument, to which this has no reference, which he dwells wholly upon; and says nothing to the argument I use in that place.

So in his reply to what I say on the parable of the wheat and tares, (p. 98. &c.) he has entirely overlooked the argument. He says, to vindicate the objection, (p. 99.) "Which we think shews us, the mind and will of Christ in this matter is, that his servants shall proceed only on certain established rules of his visible kingdom, and not upon any private rules of judging about them." Whereas, I never said, or supposed, that Christ's servants must not proceed on certain established rules of his visible kingdom, or that they ought to go upon any private rules of judging; but particularly and largely expressed my mind to the contrary, in explaining the question; (Inq. p. 5.) "That it is properly a visibility to the eye of the public charity, and not of a private judgment, that gives a right to be received as visible saints by the public." And repeat the same thing again, p. 125. *c. d.*

And as to what Mr. W. says in this place about infants being born in the church, it entirely diverts the reader to another point, (which I shall hereafter particularly consider,) wholly distinct from the subject of the argument; which is about rules of admission into the church, whenever they are admitted. If persons are born in the church in complete standing, as Mr. W. supposes, then they are not admitted at all, but in their ancestors. But however the question returns, whether ancestors that are unsanctified, can have a lawful right to come into the church? Mr. W. holds they may. The subject of the argument is about bringing in tares into the field, whenever they are brought in, whether sooner or later; and whether tares have a lawful right, by war rant from Christ, to be in the field; supposing this to intend the church of Christ. The argument I produced to the contrary was, that the tares were introduced contrary to the owner's design, through men's infirmity and Satan's procurement. Which argument, being entirely overlooked by my opponent, I desire it may be now particularly considered.

When the devil brought in the tares, it is manifest, he brought in something that did not belong there; and therein counteracted the owner of the field, and did it under that very notion of crossing his design. An enemy (says the parable) hath done this. But how does this consist with the tares having a lawful right, by the owner's warrant and appointment, to have a standing in his field? If Christ by his institution has, in mercy to unsanctified men, given them a lawful right to come into the

church, that it may be a means of their conversion; then it is a work of his kindness, as the compassionate redeemer of souls, to bring them in; and not the doing of the great enemy and destroyer of souls. If the great physician of souls has built his church, as an infirmary, in compassion to those that are sick, for this end, that they may be brought in and healed there; shall it be said with surprise, when such are found there, How came those sick people *here?* And shall the compassionate physician, who built the hospital, make answer, an enemy hath done this!

Besides, if Christ has appointed that unsanctified men should come into the church, in order to their conversion, it would be an instance of the faithfulness of his servants to bring in such. But the bringing in tares into the field, is not represented as owing to the faithfulness and watchfulness of the servants; but on the contrary, is ascribed to their sleepiness and remissness. They were brought in while they slept, who ought to have done the part of watchmen, in keeping them out, and preventing the designs of the subtle enemy that brought them in. Perhaps some would be ready to make the reflection, that those churches whose practice is agreeable to the loose principles Mr. W. espouses, do that at noon-day, in the presence of God, angels and men, which the devil did at the dead of the night, while men slept!

Again, Mr. W. in his reply to my argument from that Christian brotherly love, which is required towards all members of the visible church, goes entirely off from the argument, to things quite alien from it. His first answer (p. 69. *c.*) is, that the exercise of this Christian love is not the term of communion or admission into the visible church: which is perfectly foreign to the business. For the argument respects the object of this love, viz. visible saints, that are to be thus beloved; and not at all the qualifications of the inherent subject of it, or the person that exercises this love. If they that are admitted, are to be loved as true saints, or for the image of Christ appearing in them, or supposed to be in them, (as Mr. W. allows, p. 68. *c.*) then it will follow, that none are to be admitted, but such as can reasonably be the objects of Christian love or be loved as true saints, and as those who have the image of Christ appearing in them. Whether the exercise of this love be the term of communion, or not, yet if we are commanded to exercise this love to all that are admitted to communion, then it will certainly follow, that some reasonable ground for being thus beloved, must be a term of communion in such as are admitted. To suppose it appointed, that we should love all that are admitted as true saints, and yet that it is not appointed that such as are admitted should exhibit

any reasonable grounds for such a love, is certainly to suppose very inconsistent appointments. *

Mr. W.'s second answer (p. 70. *b*.) is no less impertinent; viz. That men's right to communion in gospel-ordinances does not depend upon the corruptions of other men, in their forbearing to love them. As if my argument were, that unless men are actually loved, as true saints, they have no right to communion! Whereas the argument was very diverse, viz. That unless men have a right to be so loved, they have no right to communion. If men have an appearance, to reason, of being true saints, they may have a right to be loved as true saints, and to be admitted as such; however corrupt and void of love other men are: but without such an appearance to reason, it is no corruption, not to love them as true saints; unless it be corrupt, not to act without reason.† As to Mr. W.'s third answer, and the misrepresentation it is built upon, it has already been taken notice of.

In Mr. W.'s reply to my answer to the first objection, (p. 81, &c.) he wholly leaves the argument, and writes in support and defence of other matters, quite different from those which I mentioned, or had any concern with. The objection which I mentioned, and which had been much insisted on by some against my opinion, was, That church-members are called disciples, or scholars; a name, that gives us a notion of the visible church as a school; and leads us to suppose, that all who profess that sort of faith and sincerity, which implies a disposition to seek Christian learning and spiritual attainments, are qualified for admission. But Mr. W. says nothing at all in support of this objection. In answer to it, I endeavoured to shew, that the name disciples, given to church-members, does not argue that unsanctified persons are fit to be members. He says nothing to shew, that it does. He says, if it will not follow from Christ's visible church being represented as Christ's school, that it is in order to

* "The apostles looked on all those, whom they gathered into churches or Christian congregations to eat the Lord's supper, as having the truth dwelling in them; and so they behoved, every one of them, to look upon one another: Seeing they could not love one another as brethren in the truth, without acknowledging that truth as dwelling in them. And so we see the apostles, in their writings to the churches, supposing all their members objects of this brotherly love.—Christ's visible church then is the congregation of those whom the apostle could call the saints and faithful in Christ Jesus."—*Glass's notes on scripture-texts*, Numb. v. p. 32.

† A good argument might also be drawn from the corruption of unsanctified men; for that they are all so under the power of corruption, that they are not able to love saints, or any one else, with truly Christian love. Agreeable to what Mr. Stoddard says in his three sermons, (p. 40.) "Men are obliged to love their neighbours as themselves. But no natural men do in any measure live up to that rule; but men are great enemies one to another, hateful and hating one another. They do but little good one to another: They do a great deal of hurt one to another." Now is it reasonable to suppose, that such men have the proper qualifications, by divine institution, for a lawful right to be members of the visible family of God!

all good attainments; yet it is in order to all that they have not yet attained. Which is nothing to the purpose, but foreign to the thing in debate, viz. Whether sanctifying grace is one of those things which are not yet attained by those that are lawfully in the church. He there says nothing to prove, that it is; and especially to prove it from the meaning of the word, disciples; which was the argument in hand. He insists, that men may be sufficiently subject to Christ as their master and teacher, in order to be in his school or church, without grace: But then the thing to be proved, was, that church-members being called disciples makes this evident, in order to support the argument or objection I was upon: which argument is entirely neglected throughout all his discourse under this head.

So in his reply to my answer to the eleventh objection, (p. 123. &c.) he wholly neglects the argument, and labours to support a different one. I endeavoured, without concerning myself about the words of any argument in Mr. Stoddard's Appeal, to answer an argument abundantly used at Northampton against my doctrine, of unsanctified men not having a right to come to the Lord's supper; which was this, "You may as well say, that unsanctified men may not attend any other duty of worship:" and particularly, "You may as well forbid them to pray."—As for Mr. S.'s objection in these words, "If unsanctified men may attend all other ordinances or duties of worship, then they may lawfully attend the Lord's supper;" it was an argument I was not obliged to attend to in the words in which he delivered it, because it was not an argument brought against my scheme of things, but one very diverse: Since it is not my opinion, that unsanctified men may attend all other ordinances, or duties of worship, besides the Lord's supper; for I do not suppose, such may offer themselves to baptism; which Mr. S. takes for granted, in his argument. And therefore what Mr. W. says in support of it, is quite beside the business. As to the argument I was concerned with, taken especially from the lawfulness of unsanctified men praying, to prove, that therefore it must be lawful for them to come to the Lord's supper; certainly if there be any consequence in it, the consequence depends upon the truth of this supposition, That the same thing which makes it lawful for a man to pray, also makes it lawful for him to come to the Lord's supper. And seeing this position is proved to be not true, the argument falls to the ground. And Mr. W.'s nice observations and distinctions, of a *non obstante*, and a *simply and per se*, are nothing to the purpose.

This good reason (with several others) may be given, why the same that makes it lawful for a man to pray and hear the word, will not make it lawful for him to partake of sacraments, viz. That the sacraments are not only duties, but covenant-

privileges, and are never lawfully given or received but under that notion. Whereas, it is not so with prayer and hearing the word: And therefore they who have no interest in the covenant of grace, and are in no respects God's covenant-people, may lawfully hear the word and pray. But it is agreed on all hands that they who are not in some respects God's covenant-people, may not come to sacraments: And the reason is this, because sacraments are covenant-privileges. And this same reason will prove, that none but true believers, or those that have saving faith, the only condition of the covenant of grace, have a right to sacraments. For, as was observed before, the condition of any covenant is the condition of all the benefits or privileges of that covenant. (See Part II. sect. 8.)

SECT. IV.

The fourth thing observed in Mr. W.'s method of managing the controversy, particularly considered, viz. His advancing new and extraordinary notions, not only manifestly contrary to truth, but also to the common and received principles of the Christian church.

Thus it is with regard to many things which have already been taken notice of. As, that men may be ungodly, and yet truly profess to love God more than the world; that men may be professors of religion and have no true grace, and yet not be lukewarm, but serve God as their only master; that such may profess to be subject to Christ with all their hearts, and to give up all their hearts and lives to Christ, and speak true, &c. &c.

I shall now take notice of another remarkable instance, viz. That Mr. W. in his reply to my argument from the epithets and characters given by the apostles to the members of visible Christian churches, in their epistles, represents (p. 56. *d.*) that there "is no difference in all the epithets and characters, which I had heaped up from the New Testament," from those that are given in the Old Testament, to the whole body of the Jewish church; which he elsewhere abundantly supposes to be the whole body of the Jewish nation; yea, even in their worst times, till the nation was rejected and cast off by God from being any longer his people; as I shall have occasion particularly to observe afterwards.

That it may be the more easily judged, how manifestly this is contrary to truth, I shall here repeat some of those epithets and characters I before mentioned, to which Mr. W. has refer-

ence. This is very manifest concerning most of them: but that I may not be tedious, I will now rehearse but a few instances, viz. Being made free from sin, and becoming the servants of righteousness: Having the spirit of adoption: Being the children of God, heirs of God, joint-heirs with Christ: Being vessels of mercy, prepared unto glory: Being such as do not live to themselves, nor die to themselves; but live to the Lord, and die unto the Lord; and who living and dying are the Lord's: Being those that have all things for theirs, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; because they are Christ's: Being begotten through the gospel: Being such as shall judge the world: Being washed, sanctified, justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the spirit of our God: Being manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ, written not with ink, but by the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart: Being such as behold as in a glass the glory of the Lord, and are changed into the same image from glory to glory: Being chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, that they should be holy and without blame before him in love; and predestinated unto the adoption of children: Being sealed by that holy spirit of promise: Being quickened, though once dead in trespasses and sins: Being made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Being dead, and having their life hid with Christ in God; and being those who when Christ who is our life shall appear, shall also appear with him in glory; having put off the old man with his deeds, and having put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him: Being begotten again to a living hope—to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for them; who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation; who love Christ, though they have not seen him; in whom, though now they see him not, yet believing, they rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory; having purified their souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit; knowing him that is from the beginning; having their sins forgiven; having overcome the wicked one; having an unction from the holy one, by which they know all things; who are now the sons of God; and who, when Christ shall appear, shall be like him, because they shall see him as he is.

Now let the Christian reader judge, with what face of reason our author could represent as though there were nothing in all these epithets and characters, more than used of old to be given to the whole nation of the Jews, and that even in times of their greatest corruption and apostacy, till the nation was rejected

of God! One would think there is no need of arguing the matter with any that have read the Bible.

This representation of Mr. W.'s is not only very contrary to truth, but also to the common sentiments of the Christian church. Though I pretend not to be a person of great reading, yet I have read enough to warrant this assertion. I never yet (as I remember) met with any author that went the same length in this matter with Mr. W. but Mr. Taylor of Norwich, in England, the author who lately has been so famous for his corrupt doctrine. In his piece, which he calls *A Key to the Apostolic Writings*, where he delivers his scheme of religion, (which seems scarcely so agreeable to the Christian scheme, as the doctrine of many of the wiser Heathen,) he delivers the same opinion, and insists largely upon it; it being a main thing to establish his whole scheme. And it evidently appears, in the manner of his delivering it, that he is sensible it is exceeding far from what has hitherto been the commonly received sentiment in the Christian world. He supposes that as all those epithets and characters belong to the whole nation of the Jews, even in their most corrupt times, so they belong to all Christendom, even in the most vicious parts of it; that the most vicious men, who are baptized, and profess to believe Jesus to be the Messiah, are chosen before the foundation of the world, predestinated according to the foreknowledge of God, regenerated, justified, sanctified, children of God, heirs of God, joint-heirs with Christ, the spouse of Christ, the temple of God, made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ, being the family of heaven, &c. &c. And certainly he may with as good reason, and with the same reason, suppose this of all Christendom, even the most vicious parts of it, as of the whole nation of the Jews, however corrupt, till there was a national rejection of them.

Indeed, it is manifest there is no other way of evading the force of the argument from the epistles, but by falling into Taylor's scheme. If his scheme of religion be not true, then it is plain as any fact in the New Testament, that all the Christian churches, through the whole earth, in the apostles' days, were constituted in the manner that I insist on. The scripture says ten times as much to demonstrate this matter, as it does about the manner of discipline, officers and government of the church, or about the several parts of the public worship, or the sanctification of the Christian sabbath.

SECT. V.

Instances of the fifth and sixth particulars, in Mr. W.'s method of disputing, viz. his using confident and peremptory assertions, and great exclamations, instead of arguments.

We have an instance of the former, in his reply to my answer to the 14th objection, viz. That it is not unlawful for unsanctified men to carry themselves like saints. I objected against this, if thereby be meant, that they may lawfully carry themselves externally like saints in all respects, remaining ungodly; and mentioned some things which belonged to the external duty of godly men, which no ungodly man, remaining such, may do. To which Mr. W. makes no reply; but to prove the point says, "Mr. S. knew, and all divines know, That the external carriage of some unsanctified men is to the outward appearance, and the public judgment of the church, the same with the carriage of the saints; and they know they are bound to such a behaviour." And this peremptory confident assertion is all the argument he brings to prove the thing asserted.

Again, I observe, that sometimes Mr. W. uses great exclamation, as though he intended to alarm, and excite terror in his readers, and raise their indignation; though they are perhaps never likely to know for what. We have two very remarkable instances of this, (p. 136 and 137.) where he says, "I shall further take notice of two extraordinary and surprising passages, if I understand them. And I have with great diligence tried to find out the meaning of them. One is p. 129. between the 17th and 23rd lines; if it be rightly printed."—He does not quote my words: This mighty exclamation would have become too flat, and appeared ridiculous, if he had. The passage referred to is in these words—"Indeed such a tendency, (*i. e.* a tendency to irreligion and profaneness,) it would have, to shut men out from having any part in the Lord, in the sense of the two tribes and half, (Josh. xxii. 25.) or to fence them out by such a partition-wall, as formerly was between Jews and Gentiles; and so to shut them out as to tell them, if they were never so much disposed to serve God, he was not ready to accept them: According to the notion the Jews seem to have had of the uncircumcised Gentiles." That is, plainly to shut them out so as to tell them that let them have hearts never so well and piously disposed to love and serve God, their love and service could not be accepted. This doubtless would have a tendency to discourage religion in men. And how the owning of it, is an owning my scheme to have such a tendency, I do not know. Mr. W. might as well have picked out any other sentence through all the 136 pages of the book,

and called it an extraordinary passage, and stood astonished over it, and told how he was ready to doubt whether it was rightly printed, and what great diligence he had used to find out the meaning of it!

The other extraordinary passage he stands thunderstruck with, is in these words; "May it not be suspected, that this way of baptizing the children of such as never make any proper profession of godliness, is an expedient originally invented for that very end, to give ease to ancestors with respect to their posterity, in times of great declension and degeneracy." Mr. W. knows, that through the whole of my book I suppose, this practice of baptizing the children of such as are here spoken of, is wrong; and so does he too; for he abundantly allows, that persons in order to be admitted to the privileges of visible saints, must make a profession of real piety, or gospel-holiness. And if it be wrong, as we are both agreed, then surely it is nothing akin to blasphemy, to suspect that it arose from some bad cause.

SECT. VI.

Instances of the seventh particular observed in Mr. W.'s way of disputing, viz. His wholly overlooking arguments, pretending there is no argument, nothing to answer; when the case is far otherwise.

Thus in his reply to my tenth argument, which was this: "It is necessary, that those who partake of the Lord's supper, should judge themselves truly and cordially to accept of Christ, as their Saviour, and chief good; for this is what the actions, which communicants perform at the Lord's table, are a solemn profession of." I largely endeavoured (in p. 75, 76, and 77.) to prove this, from the nature of those significant actions, of receiving the symbols of Christ's body and blood when offered, representing their accepting the thing signified, as their spiritual food, &c. To all which Mr. W. says, (p. 74. *a*.) "I do not find that Mr. Edwards has said any thing to prove the proposition, which is the whole argument offered here in proof of the point proposed to be proved, but only gives his opinion, or paraphrase of the purport and nature of the sacramental actions." Since Mr. W. esteems it no argument, I desire it may be considered impartially whether there be any argument in it or no.

These sacramental actions all allow to be significant actions: They are a signification and profession of something: They are not actions without a meaning. And all allow, that these external actions signify something inward and spiritual. And if they

signify any thing spiritual, they doubtless signify those spiritual things which they represent. But what inward thing does the outward taking or accepting the body and blood of Christ represent, but the inward accepting Christ's body and blood, or an accepting him in the heart? And what spiritual thing is the outward feeding on Christ in this ordinance a sign of, but a spiritual feeding on Christ, or the soul's feeding on him? Now there is no other way of the soul's feeding on him, but by that faith, by which Christ becomes our spiritual food, and the refreshment and vital nourishment of our souls. The outward eating and drinking in this ordinance is a sign of spiritual eating and drinking, as much as the outward bread in this ordinance is a sign of spiritual bread; or as much as the outward drink is a sign of spiritual drink. And doubtless those actions, if they are a profession of any thing at all, are a profession of the things they signify.* To say that these significant actions are appointed to be a profession of something, but not to be a profession of the things they are appointed to signify, is as unreasonable as to say, that certain sounds or words are appointed to be a profession of something, but not to be a profession of the things signified by those words.

Again, Mr. W. in his reply to my answer to the second objection, with like contempt passes over the main argument which I offered, to prove that the nation of Israel were called God's people, and covenant-people, in another sense besides a being visible saints. My argument (in p. 85, 86.) was this: That it is manifest, something diverse from being visible saints, is often intended by that nation being called God's people, and that the family of Israel according to the flesh—not with regard to any moral and religious qualifications—were in some sense adopted by God, to be his peculiar and covenant-people; from Rom. ix. 3, 4, 5.—I could wish myself accursed from Christ for my brethren according to the flesh; who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the *covenants*, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose

* Mr. Stoddard owns, that the sacramental actions, both in baptism and the Lord's supper, signify saving faith in Christ. (Safety of App. p. 120.) "By baptism is signified our fellowship with Christ in his sufferings. That is signified hereby, that we have an interest in the virtue of his sufferings, that his sufferings are made over unto us, and that we do participate in the good and benefit of them.——It was John the Baptist's manner, before he baptized persons, to teach them that they must believe on Christ. And the apostles, and apostolical men would not baptize any adult persons but such as professed to believe on Christ. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved. Baptism is mentioned as the evidence of faith."—So concerning the Lord's supper, (Ibid. p. 122. *e.* 123. *a.*) "In this ordinance we are invited to put our trust in the death of Christ. Take, eat; this is my body: and drink ye all of it. When the body feeds on the sacramental bread and wine, the soul is to do that which answers unto it; the soul is to feed on Christ crucified; which is nothing else but the acting faith on him."

are the fathers," &c. I observed, that these privileges are spoken of as belonging to the Jews, not now as visible saints, not as professors of the true religion, not as members of the visible church of Christ, (which they did not belong to,) but only as a people of such a nation, such a blood, such an external carnal relation to the patriarchs, their ancestors; Israelites according to the flesh: inasmuch as the apostle is speaking here of the unbelieving Jews, professed unbelievers, that were out of the Christian church, and open visible enemies to it; and such as had no right at all to the external privileges of Christ's people. I observed further, that in like manner this apostle in Rom. xi. 28,29. speaks of the same unbelieving Jews that were enemies to the gospel, as in some respect an elect people, and interested in the calling, promises and covenants, God formerly gave their forefathers, and are still beloved for their sakes. "As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance."

All that Mr. W. says, which has any reference to these things, is, "That he had read my explication of the name of the people of God, as given to the people of Israel, &c. But that he confesses, it is perfectly unintelligible to him." The impartial reader is left to judge, whether the matter did not require some other answer.

SECT. VII.

What is, and what is not begging the question; and how Mr. W. charges me, from time to time, with begging the question, without cause.

Among the particulars of Mr. W.'s method of disputing, I observed, that he often causelessly charges me with begging the question, while he frequently begs the question himself, or does that which is equivalent.

But that it may be determined with justice and clearness, who does, and who does not beg the question, I desire it may be particularly considered, what that is which is called begging the question in a dispute.—This is more especially needful for the sake of illiterate readers. And here,

1. Let it be observed, that merely to suppose something in a dispute, without bringing any argument to prove it, is not begging the question: for this is done necessarily, in every dispute, and even in the best and clearest demonstrations. One point is proved by another, till at length the matter is reduced to a point that is supposed to need no proof; either because it is self-evi-

dent, or is a thing wherein both parties are agreed, or so clear that it is supposed it will not be denied.

2. Nor is begging the question the same thing as offering a weak argument, to prove the point in question. It is not all weak arguing, but one particular way of weak arguing, that is called begging the question.

3. Nor is it the same thing as missing the true question, and bringing an argument that is impertinent, or beside the question.

But the thing which is called begging the question, is the making use of the very point in debate, or the thing to be proved, as an argument to prove itself. Thus, if I were endeavouring to prove that none but godly persons might come to sacraments and should take this for an argument to prove it, That none might come but such as have saving faith, taking this for granted; I should then beg the question; for this is the very point in question whether a man must have saving faith or no? It is called begging the question, because it is a depending as it were on the courtesy of the other side, to grant me the point in question, without offering any argument as the price of it.

And whether the point I thus take for granted, be the main point in question, in the general dispute, or some subordinate point, something under consideration, under a particular argument; yet if I take this particular point for granted, and then make use of it to prove itself, it is begging the question.

Thus if I were endeavouring, under this general controversy between Mr. W. and me, to prove that particular point, that we ought to love all the members of the church as true saints; and should bring this as a proof of the point, that we ought to love all the members of the church as true Christians, taking this for granted; this is only the same thing under another term, as the thing to be proved; and therefore is no argument at all, but only begging the question.

Or if the point I thus take for granted, and make use of as an argument, be neither the general point in controversy, nor yet the thing nextly to be proved under a particular argument; yet if it be some known controverted point between the parties, it is begging the question, or equivalent to it: for it is begging a thing known to be in question in the dispute, and using it as if it were a thing allowed.

I would now consider the instances, wherein Mr. W. asserts or suggests that I have begged the question.

In p. 30. *d. e.* and 31. *a. b.* he represents the force of my reasoning as built on a supposition, that there is no unsanctified man, but what knows he has no desire of salvation by Christ, no design to fulfil the covenant of grace, but designs to live in stealing, lying, adultery,—or some other known sin: And then says,

"Is it not manifest, that such sort of reasoning is a mere quibbling with words, and begging the question?" And so insinuates, that I have thus begged the question. Whereas, I nowhere say or suppose this which he speaks of, nor any thing like it. But on the contrary, often say, what supposes an unsanctified man may think he is truly godly, and that he has truly upright and gracious designs and desires. Nor does any argument of mine depend on any such supposition. Nay, under the argument he speaks of, I expressly suppose the contrary, viz. That unsanctified men who visibly enter into covenant, may be deceived.

In p. 38. *a*. Mr. W. makes a certain representation of my arguing from Isaiah lvi. and then says upon it, "It is no arguing, but only begging the question." But as has been already shewn, that which he represents as my argument from that scripture, has no relation to my argument.

In p. 59, in opposition to my arguing from the epistles, that the apostles treated those members of churches which they wrote to, as those who had been received on a positive judgment, i. e. (as I explain myself,) a proper and affirmative opinion, that they were real saints; Mr. W. argues, that the apostles could make no such judgment of them, without either personal converse, or revelation: unless it be supposed to be founded on a presumption, that ministers who baptized them, would not have done it, unless they had themselves made such a positive judgment concerning their state: and then adds these words, this may do for this scheme, but only it is a begging the question. Whereas, it is a point that never has been in question in this controversy, as ever I knew, whether some ministers or churches might reasonably, and affirmatively suppose, the members of other churches they are united with, were admitted on evidence of proper qualifications, (whatever they be, whether common or saving,) trusting to the faithfulness of other ministers and churches. Besides, this can be no point in question between me and Mr. W. unless it be a point in question between him and himself. For he holds, as well as I, that persons ought not to be received as visible Christians, without moral evidence (which is something positive, and not a mere negation of evidence of the contrary) of gospel-holiness.

In p. 82. of my book I suppose, that none at all do truly subject themselves to Christ as their master, but those who graciously subject themselves to him, and are delivered from the reigning power of sin. Mr. W. suggests, (p. 83. *d*.) that herein I beg the question. For which there is no pretext, not only as this is no known point in controversy between the parties in this debate; but also as it is a point I do not take for granted, but offer this argument to prove it, that they who have no grace, are under the reigning power of sin, and no man can truly subject

himself to two such contrary masters, at the same time, as Christ and sin. I think this argument sufficient to obtain the point, without begging it. And besides, this doctrine, that they who have no grace do not truly subject themselves to Christ, was no point in question between me and Mr. W.; but a point wherein we were fully agreed, and wherein he had before expressed himself as fully, and more fully than I. In his sermons on *Christ a King and Witness*, (p. 18. *b.*) he speaks of all such as do not depend on Christ, believe in him, and give up themselves and all to him, as not true subjects to Christ; but enemies to him, and his kingdom. We have expressions to the same purpose again, in p. 74. and 91. And in p. 94. *d. e.* of the same book, he says, "It is utterly inconsistent with the nature of the obedience of the gospel, that it should be a forced subjection.—No man is a subject of Christ, who does not make the laws and will of Christ his choice, and desire to be governed by him, and to live in subjection to the will of Christ, as good and fit, and best to be the rule of his living, and way to his happiness. A forced obedience to Christ is no obedience. It is in terms a contradiction. Christ draws men with the cords of love, and the bands of a man. Our Lord has himself expressly determined this point." There are other passages in the same book to the same purpose. So that I had no need to beg this point of Mr. W. since he had given it largely, and that in full measure, and over and over again, without begging.

In p 120. *b.* he observes, "That to say such a profession of internal invisible things is the rule to direct the church in admission—is to hide the parallel, and beg the question. For the question here is about the persons' right to come, and not about the church's admitting them." Here Mr. W. would make us believe that he does not know what begging the question is: for it is evident, his meaning is, that my saying so is beside the question. But to say something beside the question, is a different thing from begging the question, as has been observed. My saying, that a profession of invisible things is the church's rule in admission, is not begging the question: because it is not, nor ever was any thing in question. For Mr. S. and Mr. W. himself are full in it, that a profession of invisible things, such as a believing that Christ is the Son of God, &c. is the church's rule. Yea, Mr. W. is express in it, that a credible profession and visibility of gospel-holiness is the church's rule, p. 139. Nor is my saying as above, beside the question then in hand, relating to the church of Israel admitting to the priesthood, those that could not find their register. For that wholly relates to the rule of admission to the priesthood, and not to the priests' assurance of their own right For, as I observed, if the priests had been never so fully assured of their pedigree, yet if they could not demonstrate it to

others by a public register, it would not have availed for their admission.

Again, in p. 124. *c.* Mr. W. charges me with begging the question, in supposing that sacraments are duties of worship whose very nature and design is an exhibition of those vital and active principles and inward exercises, wherein consists the condition of the covenant of grace. He charges the same thing as a begging the question, p. 131. *d.*—But this is no begging the question, for two reasons; (1.) Because I had before proved this point, by proofs which Mr. W. has not seen cause to attempt to answer, as has been just now observed, in the last section.—(2.) This, when I wrote, was no point in question, wherein Mr. W. and I differed; but wherein we were agreed, and in which he had declared himself as fully as I, in his sermons on *Christ a King and Witness;* p. 76. *c.* "When we attend sacraments, (says he,) we are therein visibly to profess our receiving Christ, and the graces of his Spirit, and the benefits of his redemption, on his own terms and offer, and giving up the all of our souls to him, on his call, covenant, and engagement." And in the next preceding page but one, in a place forecited, he speaks of these acts "as mockery, hypocrisy, falsehood, and lies, if they are not the expressions of faith and hope, and spiritual acts of obedience. So that I had no manner of need to come to Mr. W. as a beggar for these things, which he had so plentifully given me, and all the world that would accept them, years before.

SECT. VIII.

Shewing how Mr W. often begs the question himself.

The question is certainly begged in that argument which Mr. W. espouses and defends, viz. That the Lord's supper has a proper tendency to promote men's conversion. In the prosecution of the argument Mr. W. implicitly yields, that it is not the apparent natural tendency alone, that is of any force to prove the point; but the apparent tendency under this circumstance, that there is no express prohibition. And thus it is allowed, that in the case of express prohibition with respect to the scandalous and morally insincere, no seeming tendency in the nature of the thing proves the ordinance to be intended for the conviction and conversion of such. So that it is a thing supposed in this argument, that all morally insincere persons are expressly forbidden, but unsanctified persons not so. Now when it is supposed, that morally insincere persons are expressly forbidden, the thing meant cannot be, that they are forbidden in those very words:

for no such prohibition is to be found: nor are men that live in sodomy, beastiality, and witchcraft, any where expressly forbidden in this sense. But the thing intended must be, that they are very evidently forbidden, by plain implication, or consequence. But then the whole weight of the argument lies in this supposition, that unsanctified persons are not also plainly and evidently forbidden; which is the very point in question. And therefore to make this the ground of an argument to prove this point, is a manifest begging the question. And what Mr. W. says to the contrary, (p. 127. *a.*) that Mr. Stoddard had proved this point before, avails nothing: For let it be never so much proved before, yet, after all, to take this very point and make use of it as a further argument to prove itself, is certainly begging the question. The notion of bringing a new argument is bringing additional proof: But to take a certain point, supposed to be already proved, to prove itself with over again, certainly does not add any thing to the evidence.

Mr. W. says, my supposing unconverted persons, as such, to be as evidently forbidden, as scandalous persons, is as much begging the question. I answer, So it would be, if I made that point an argument to prove itself with, after Mr. W.'s manner. But this is far from being the case in fact.

And the question is again most certainly begged, in that other thing said to support this argument, viz. That though the Lord's supper may seem to have a tendency to convert scandalous sinners, yet there is another ordinance appointed for that. Here the meaning must be, that there is another ordinance, exclusive of the Lord's supper; otherwise it is nothing to the purpose. For they do not deny but that there are other ordinances for the conversion of sinners, who are morally sincere, as well as of those who are scandalous. But the question is, whether other ordinances are appointed for their conversion exclusive of the Lord's supper; or, whether the Lord's supper be one ordinance appointed for their conversion? This is the grand point in question. And to take this point as the foundation of an argument, to prove this same point, is plainly begging the question. And it is also giving up the argument from the tendency, and resting the whole argument on another thing.

Mr. W. again plainly begs the question in his reply, (p. 127. *c. d.*) That God's prohibition is an argument, that God saw there was no such tendency for their conversion. His so saying supposes again, that there is no evident prohibition of unsanctified persons. In which he again flies to the very point in question, and rests the weight of his reasoning upon it.

Just in the same manner Mr. W. begs the question in espousing and making use of that argument, That all in external covenant, and neither ignorant nor scandalous, are commanded

to perform all external covenant-duties. Here it is supposed, that scandalous persons, (which, according to Mr. W.'s scheme, must include all that have not moral sincerity,) though in the external covenant, are expressly, that is, evidently excepted and forbidden: and that unsanctified men are not also evidently forbidden; which is the point in question. For if unsanctified men, though in external covenant, are as evidently forbidden and excepted, as scandalous men that are in external covenant, then the argument touches not one any more than the other. So that the argument is entirely a castle in the air, resting on nothing but itself. The grand thing to be proved, first taken for granted, and then made an argument to prove itself!

In explaining the nature of begging the question, I observed, that it is begging the question, or equivalent to it, whether the point that is taken for granted, and made an argument of, be the main point in controversy, or some particular known disputed point between the controverting parties: I will now illustrate this by an example. It is a known disputed point in this controversy, whether in the parable concerning the man without the wedding-garment, the king condemned the man for coming into the church without grace. Now supposing that I, because I look on the matter as very clear, should, besides using it as one distinct argument, also make it the basis of other arguments; and should use it in opposition to the strongest arguments of my opposers, as if it were sufficient to stop their mouths, without offering any proper solution of those arguments: As, in case I were pressed with the argument from the passover, if I should fly to the man without the wedding-garment; and should say, It is certain, this argument from the passover can be of no force against the express word of God in Matt. xxii. For there it is plain as any fact that ever the sun shone upon, that the king condemns the man for coming into the church without a wedding-garment; and it is plain as the sun at noon-day, that the wedding-garment is grace.—And if when the argument from Judas's partaking of the Lord's supper is alledged, I should again fly to the man without a wedding-garment, and say, Whatever reasons Christ might have for admitting Judas, yet it is plainly revealed, in Matt. xxii. 12, that God does not approve of men coming into the church without a wedding garment: This would be a beggarly, impertinent way of disputing, thus to answer one argument by throwing another in the way, which is contested, and the validity of which is denied. It is fair, that I should have liberty to use the argument concerning the wedding-garment, in its place, and make the most of it: But to use it as the support of other arguments, is to produce no additional proof. And thus, from time to time, to produce the disputed hypothesis of one argument, for answer to the arguments

of my antagonist, instead of solving those arguments, is flying and hiding from arguments, instead of answering them: instead of defending the fortress which is attacked, it is dodging and flying from one refuge to another.

Mr. W. acts this part from time to time, in the use he makes of his great argument from the Old Testament church and its ordinances. Thus (in p. 8.) he takes this method to answer my argument from the nature of visibility and profession, insisting that the Israelites avouching and covenanting was a thing compatible with ungodliness; which he knows is a disputed point in this controversy, and what I deny. Again, he makes use of the same thing, in answer to my argument from the nature of covenanting with God. (p. 23, 24.) And again he brings it in, (p. 25. *c.* 26. *a.*) answering what I say, by confidently asserting that concerning the church of Israel, which he knows is disputed, and I deny; viz. That the covenanting of Israel did not imply a profession that they did already believe and repent: As in these words, "This was never intended nor understood, in the profession which the Israelites made; but that they would immediately and from thenceforth comply with the terms of the covenant; and by the help of God, offered in it, would fulfil it. I am sure, this was what they professed; and I am sure, God declared he took them into covenant with him." And the same thing is brought in again to answer the same argument. (p. 31. *c.*) The same thing is thrown in, once and again, as an answer to what I say of the unreasonableness of accepting such professions as leave room to judge the greater part of the professors to be enemies of God. (p. 34. *b. c.*) The same thing is cast in as a sufficient block in the way of my arguing from the unreasonableness of accepting such professions, as amount to nothing more than lukewarmness. (p. 36, *d. e.*) The same is brought in, and greatly insisted on, to stop my mouth, in arguing from the epistles. (p. 56, 57.) The same is brought in again, to enervate my argument concerning brotherly-love. (p. 69. *d.*) And this is made use of as the support of other arguments; as that from the name disciples, and about the church being the school of Christ; and to confute what I say, in answer to that argument. (p. 84. *a.*) The same is brought in as a support of the eleventh objection, and a confutation of my answer to that. (p. 125. *c. d. e.*) And again, in reply to what I say in answer to the nineteenth objection. (p. 137. *b. c.*)

Another thing, near akin to begging the question, is resting the weight of arguments on things asserted without proof; which, though they do not properly make a part of the controversy, yet are things not allowed by those on the other side. Thus does Mr. W. in his arguing from the success of the Lord's supper in the conversion of sinners: (p. 137, 138.) supposing,

not only that the Lord's supper has been the occasion of the conversion of many, but that their communicating was the means of it. This he offers nothing to prove, and it is not allowed by those on the other side.* And it is what would be very hard to prove: If many were converted at the Lord's table, (which yet is not evident,) it would not prove, that their partaking was the means of their conversion; it might be only what they saw and heard there, which others may see and hear, that do not partake.

SECT. IX.

Mr. W.'s inconsistence with himself, in what he says in answer to my third and fourth arguments, and in his reply to my arguments from the Acts, and the Epistles.

The last thing observed in Mr. W.'s way of disputing, is his alledging and insisting on things wherein he is inconsistent with himself. His inconsistencies are of many sorts. Sometimes he alledges those things that are inconsistent with the doctrine of those whose principles he pretends to maintain.—He abundantly urges those things against my scheme, which are in like manner against his own. He often argues against those things which he allows, and strenuously insists on. He denies what he affirms, and affirms what he utterly denies; laying down and urging those things which are contrary to what he says in other books; and sometimes contrary to what he says in the same book. Yielding up the thing wherein the argument lies, yet strenuously maintaining the argument.—Allowing both premises and consequence, yet finding fault, and opposing. Sometimes he urges things which are contrary to what he says under different arguments; and sometimes contrary to what he says under the same argument. Sometimes he contradicts himself in the plain sense and meaning of what he says; at other times even in plain terms. Sometimes in effect contradicting himself in the same breath, and in the same sentence.

These various kinds of inconsistence have many of them been already observed. And will further appear by a particular consideration of what he says on several heads, in what remains.

In my third argument, I insisted, that it could not be much

* Thus that very eminent divine, and successful minister of Christ, the late Dr. Doddridge, in his Sermons on Regeneration, speaking of the means of regeneration, (p. 251. *e.* 252. *a.*) says, "I do not mention the administration of sacraments, upon this occasion; because though they have so noble and effectual a tendency to improve men's minds in piety, and to promote Christian edification; yet I do not remember to have heard of any instance, in which they have been the means of men's conversion: which is the less to be wondered at, as they are appointed for a very different end."

to God's honour, for men to profess the assent of their judgment to the true religion, without pretending to any real friendship or love to God in their hearts. Mr. W. in opposition, (p. 34. *d. e.*) speaks of it as an honour to God, that secret hypocrites openly declare their conviction of the truth of God's word, &c. as in the multitude of subjects is the king's honour. And yet he himself represents the matter quite otherwise in his sermons on *Christ a King and Witness;* there (p. 87. *a.*) he has these words, "To promote the kingdom of Christ, is not to do that which may prevail with men to make pretences that they are Christians, or that they own Jesus Christ as their Saviour, and to call him Lord, Lord, when really he is not so."

In answer to my fourth argument, (p. 35. *d.*) Mr. W. says, I make a great misrepresentation of the matter, in insinuating that according to Mr. S—d's scheme, (of which scheme he declares himself to be) they who are admitted make a pretence of *no more* than moral sincerity, and common grace. And yet he insists, that when Philip required a profession of the Eunuch's faith, his question designed *no more* than an assent of the understanding, (p. 51. *a. b.*) which he there distinguishes from saving faith: and says, that it is morally certain that his inquiry amounted to *no more*. And yet in his discourse on the same head, (p. 49. *c.*) he inveighs against me for supposing it a consequence of the opinion of my opposers, that the Eunuch, in order to come to sacraments, had no need to look at any such qualification in himself as saving faith.—Certainly the Eunuch in making answer to Philip's inquiry, had no need to look at any more than Philip inquired after. In p. 50. *a.* he says, "It does not seem at all probable, that Philip *inquired any thing* about the regeneration or sanctification of the Eunuch." And yet in the next preceding sentence, he refers me over to another judgment, for representing, as though my opposers supposed, that it was no matter whether a person coming to gospel-ordinances had any grace or not, and had no manner of need to inquire any thing about his sincerity.

And though he highly blames me for insinuating, as above, that my opposers require a pretence of *no more* than common grace and moral sincerity; yet in opposition to my insisting on a profession of saving faith, speaking of the profession which the apostles required, he says, (p. 58. *c*) "It is certain that a profession in these words, which was wont to be required, do sometimes import *no more* than a conviction of the understanding on moral evidence." So he says concerning those whose admission into the Christian church we have an account of in Acts ii. (p. 45. *e.*) "There is not one word said about *any other faith*, but believing that Jesus was the Messiah. And if so, then certainly *no more* was professed.

In p. 35. *e.* he allows that all visible saints who are not truly pious, are hypocrites; and yet maintains, that the profession they make is no more than what they make and speak *honestly* and *truly*. (p. 105. *d.* & 47. *c.*) how then are they all hypocrites, if they are honestly and truly what they profess to be?

In supporting the argument from John's baptism, he insists, that the profession the people made, did not imply, that they had savingly repented: and that John openly supposed, that their profession did not imply it, in what he said to them. (p. 97. *a. b. c.*)—And (p. 98. *a. b.*) he says, "We read not a word of John's inquiring whether these people made a credible profession of true piety." And he there manifestly suggests, that John knew they were not pious, as he knew they were a generation of vipers. Yet how often elsewhere does Mr. W. insist, that men in order to come to sacraments must make a credible profession of true piety and gospel-holiness, and that they must in a judgment of charity be supposed to have real godliness?

In answer to my argument from the instance of the converts in Acts ii. Mr. W. speaking of their convictions, and being pricked in their hearts, (p. 45. *c. d. e.*) says, "They were convinced that Jesus was the true Messiah and Saviour, whom God had promised to Israel,—whereupon convinced of their sin, they cry out what shall we do? To which the apostles reply, repent and be baptized,—in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.—There is not one word said about any other faith, but believing that Jesus was the Messiah."—And in the two next pages Mr. W. insists, that their gladly receiving the word can by no necessity from the text imply more, than that they now believed that Jesus was the Messiah, and that it was matter of joy to them that the Messiah was come.—So that we have this inconsistent account of the matter from Mr. W.; that these people are first convinced that Jesus is the Messiah, and this is cause of distress to them: and they ask, what they shall do? Hereupon the apostles direct them to believe that Jesus is the Messiah; which they believed already, before they asked the question: but however, when they heard this, they believed that Jesus was the Messiah. They now found it out, as a new thing they did not know of before, and are glad at the joyful discovery; though just before they believed the same thing, and the discovery filled them with distress.

In p. 47. *b.* whereas it is said concerning these new converts,—"That such were added to the church, as were the saved,"—Mr. W. says, the like appellation is given to the whole church of Israel. And in this, and the foregoing page, he insists, that these converts were before in the church of Israel, and

were not now admitted, but only continued as some of God's people. But if these things were so, they were *the saved* before their conversion to Christianity, as much as after; and others that were in the Jewish church, that were not yet converted to Christianity, were as much *the saved* as they. And then why is their being saved spoken of as what was now brought to pass, and as a thing that distinguished the believing Jews from others?

In the same page *c.* Mr. W. says, "we do not dispute but that the apostles supposed and believed in charity, so far as they had any thing to do to suppose or believe any thing about it, that God had given these persons saving repentance, and an heart-purifying faith." And yet in p. 61. he speaks of the apostles as supposing the contrary of many of those that had been admitted into the primitive church; in that they speak of them, as such temples of God as might be destroyed: "Which (says Mr. W.) cannot be true of sanctified persons, unless they can fall from grace."

In his answer to the argument from Philip and the Eunuch he supposes, that believing with all the heart is only such a belief of the doctrine of Christianity as unsanctified men may have. And yet in that forementioned place, (*Christ a King and Witness*, p. 144.) he says, a man before he is renewed by the Holy Ghost, has a view of the truth as a doubtful uncertain thing. And in the book now especially attended to, he in effect owns the thing, which he earnestly disputes against in reply to this argument. He greatly insists, that the phrase, with all the heart, does not signify gracious sincerity; and yet he owns it does. (p. 51. *c.* & 52. *a. b.*) He owns, that according to the usual way of speaking among mankind, both in our days, and also in the times when the scriptures were written, "God requires men to give him their hearts, intending by it such a sincerity as God will own and accept; which be sure (says he) is nothing less than a gracious sincerity; which never can be, unless the whole soul and all its faculties be engaged for God." Then afterwards adds, "But how will this any way prove, that when men use the same expressions, it must necessarily be understood in the same sense?" And yet in the same breath, he had observed that God in thus using the phrase, uses it according to the usual manner of speaking *among mankind*. He gives this reason, why the phrase need not be understood in the same sense when used by men, that men are not searchers of hearts. But the argument is about the phrase as Philip put it to the Eunuch's own conscience, which was or ought to be a searcher of his heart.

And by the way I must observe, that Mr. W. would have done well, if he was able, to have reconciled these repugnant things taken notice of in my book; "That with the heart, man

believeth to righteousness," and that if men believe with the heart that God raised Christ from the dead, they shall be saved; agreeable to Rom. x. 9, 10. And yet that men may believe this with their heart, yea, and with all their heart, and still not believe to righteousness, nor ever be saved. So likewise, that "whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God;" as in 1 John iv. 15. And that "whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God," 1 John v. 1. And yet, that a man may believe this very thing "with all his heart, and confess it with his mouth;" and this in the language of the same apostles and primitive ministers; and still not "be born of God," nor have a spark of grace in him.

It may also be worthy to be considered, whether it be reasonable to suppose, that the faith which a man must profess, in order to being in the visible kingdom of Christ, and not in the visible kingdom of the devil, must not be some other sort of faith than that which the devil has: That seeing the very design of a public profession of religion is to declare on which side we are, whether on Christ's, or on the devil's, no other faith is required to be professed, than such as Satan himself has, and such as is not at all inconsistent with being a willing, cursed servant, and slave of the devil, and enemy to Christ; as Mr. W. says, all unsanctified men are.

Mr. W. in his reply to my argument from the epistles, (p. 55.) speaks of it as an unaccountable thing, that I should represent as if according to the principles of my opposites, the primitive Christians were not admitted under any such notion of their being *really* godly persons, or with any respect to such a character:* and yet in his discourse on the same head, he abundantly insists, that it was not *real* holiness, but only *federal* holiness, which was the qualification to which the apostles had respect in admitting them; expressly, from time to time, distinguishing federal holiness from real. In p. 56. *e.* & 57. *a.* "It makes it evident (says he) that this manner of treating churches and bodies of men, and such expressions used to them and of them, are to be understood in *no other sense*, than to signify *federal* holiness."—So in p. 60. he affirms the same thing, once and again, distinguishing federal holiness from real. He says, They formed no positive judgment of their *real* piety.—And knew nothing at all about them, but only that they were *federally* holy. And again, "They did not make a positive judgment, that these persons were *really* godly; and the high characters they gave them, and the hopes they expressed concerning them, could be under-

* So in p. 132. *c.* he exclaims against me thus: "After all this, to repeat it again and again, that these persons have no visibility to reason of *real* saintship, &c. I think gives better ground to retort Mr. Edwards's words."

stood in no other sense than as holding forth a *federal* holiness." So that by this, they expressed no *hopes* concerning any thing more than their federal holiness as distinguished from real. And he argues earnestly, through the two next pages, that they could not be looked upon, many of them, as having real holiness. How does this consist with their being treated as visible saints; under the notion of their having real holiness, and from respect to such a character appearing on them? or with none being visible saints, but such as have a credible visibility of gospel-holiness?

So in p. 63. *b.* he speaks of the gross scandals of many of those to whom the apostles wrote, as an absolute proof, that they considered them only as federally holy; which he in the same place distinguishes from real holiness. Then how were they treated (as he insists) as those that had the character of *real piety* appearing on them, and as making a credible profession of gospel-holiness, and real Christianity? Which, he abundantly allows, all must make in order to being visible saints. See also p. 64. *e.*

In p. 58. Mr. W. insists, that it does not appear, that those who were admitted into the primitive church, made a declaration that they had saving faith, but *only* that they engaged to that faith. But how does this consist with what he abundantly says elsewhere, that they must pretend to real piety, make a profession of gospel holiness, exhibit moral evidence that they have such holiness, &c.? These things are something else besides engaging to saving faith and gospel-holiness for the future.

SECT. X.

The unreasonableness and inconsistence of Mr. W's answer to my argument from the man without a wedding-garment, and concerning brotherly love, and from 1 Cor. xi. 28, *and of what he says in support of the* 15*th objection.*

Mr. W. in answering my argument from Matt. xxii. 11, allows that the king's house, into which the guest came, is the visible church, (p. 43. *c.* and 44. *d.*) So that the man's coming in hither, is his coming into the visible church. Nor does he at all dispute but that by the wedding-garment is meant saving grace; (for truly the thing is too evident to be disputed:) And yet he says, (p. 43. *b. c.*) "We read nothing of Christ condemning the man for coming into the church without saving grace." So that Mr. W.'s answer amounts plainly to this; The king, when he comes to judgment, will say, I do not at

all condemn thee for coming in hither without a wedding-garment: but, friend, how camest thou in hither without a wedding-garment? And no wonder; the case is too plain to allow of any other than such a lamentable refuge, as this is.—If the wedding-garment be saving grace, which is not denied; and if coming into the king's house be coming into the visible church, as Mr. W. owns; then if the king condemns the man for coming into the house without a wedding-garment, he condemns him for coming into the visible church without saving grace.

It is plain, the thing the man is blamed for, is something else than simply a being without grace, or without a wedding-garment. The king's words have respect to this as it stands in connection with coming into the king's house. If Christ has commanded men who are not converted, to come into the church, that they may be converted; he will never say to them, upon their obeying this command, friend, how camest thou in hither before thou wast converted? Which would be another thing than blaming him simply for not being converted. If a man, at his own cost, sets up a school, in order to teach ignorant children to read; and accordingly ignorant children should go thither in order to learn to read; would he come into the school, and say in anger to an ignorant child that he found there, How camest thou in hither, before thou hadst learnt to read? Did the apostle Paul ever rebuke the Heathen, who came to hear him preach the gospel, saying, How came you hither to hear me preach, not having grace? This would have been unreasonable, because preaching is an ordinance appointed to that end, that men might obtain grace. And so, in Mr. W.'s scheme, is the Lord's supper. Can we suppose, that Christ will say to men in indignation, at the day of judgment, How came you to presume to use the means I appointed for your conversion, before you were converted?

It is true, the servants were to invite all, both bad and good, to come to the feast, and to compel them to come in: but this does not prove, that bad men, remaining in their badness, have a lawful right to come. The servants were to invite the vicious, as well as the moral; they were to invite the Heathen, who were especially meant by them that were in the highways and hedges: Yet it will not follow, that the Heathen, while remaining Heathen, have a lawful right to come to Christian sacraments. But Heathen men must turn from their Heathenism, and come: so likewise wicked men must turn from their wickedness, and come.

I endeavoured to prove, that that brotherly love, which is required towards the members of the Christian church in general, is such a love as is required to those only whom we have reason to look upon as true saints. Mr. W. disputes, through

two pages, (p. 66, 67.) against the force of my reasoning to prove this point; and yet when he has done, he allows the point. He allows it (p. 68. *d. e.*)as an undisputed thing, that it is the image of God and Christ appearing or supposed to be in others, that is the ground and reason of this love. And so again, (p. 71. *d. e.*) he grants, that there must be some apprehension, and judgment of the mind, of the saintship of persons, in order to this brotherly love. Indeed he pretends to differ from me in this, that he denies the need of any positive judgment: But doubtless the judgment or apprehension of the mind must be as positive as the love founded on that apprehension and judgment of the mind.

In p. 78, 79. he seems to insist, that what the apostle calls unworthy communicating, is eating in a greedy, disorderly and irreverent manner: as though men might communicate without grace, and yet not communicate unworthily, in the apostle's sense. But if so, the apostle differed much in his sense of things from Mr. W.—The latter says, in his sermon on *Christ a King and Witness*, (p. 77. 78.) "These outward acts of worship, when not performed from faith in Christ, and love to God, are mocking God—in their own nature a lie—the vilest wickedness:—instead of being that religion, which Christ requires, it is infinitely contrary to it—the most flagrant and abominable impiety, and threatened with the severest damnation." Is not this a communicating unworthily enough of all reason?

In p. 132, 133. Mr. W. strenuously opposes me in my supposition, that the way of freely allowing all that have only moral sincerity to come into the church, tends to the reproach and ruin of the church. On the contrary, he seems to suppose it tends to the establishing and building up of the church. But I desire that what Mr. Stoddard says, in his sermon on *the danger of speedy degeneracy*, may be considered under this head. He there largely insists, that the prevailing of unconverted men and unholy professors among a people, is the principal thing that brings them into danger of speedy degeneracy and corruption. He says, that where this is the case, there will be many bad examples, that will corrupt others; and that unconverted men will indulge their children in evil, will be negligent in their education; and that by this means their children will be very corrupt and ungoverned;* that by this means the godly themselves that are among them, will be tainted, as sweet liquor put into a corrupt vessel will be tainted; that thus

* If we have reason to expect it will be thus with ungodly parents, with respect to their children, then certainly such cannot reasonably expect ministers and churches should admit their children to baptism, in a dependence that they do give them up to God, and will bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, if they make no profession that implies more than moral sincerity; and none but what wicked men may as well make as the godly, and speak true.

a people will grow blind, will not much regard the warnings of the word, or the judgments of God; and that they will grow weary of religious duties after awhile; and that many of their leading men will be carnal; and that this will expose a people to have carnal ministers and other leading men in the town and church.

And I desire also, that here may be considered what Mr. W. himself says, in that passage forecited, (p. 86, 87.) of his sermons on *Christ a King and Witness;* where, in explaining what it is to promote the kingdom of Christ, he says negatively, "That it is not to do that which may prevail on men to make pretences, that they are Christians, and that they own Jesus Christ as their Saviour, and to call him Lord, Lord, when really he is not so." Which he supposes is the case with all unsanctified professors; for in the same book, he abundantly declares, that they who make such pretences, and have not true faith and love, make false and lying pretences; as has been several times observed.

SECT. XI.

The impertinence *of arguments, that are in like manner against the schemes of* both *the controverting parties: And this exemplified in what Mr. W. says concerning the notion of Israel being the people of God, and his manner of arguing concerning the members of the primitive Christian church.*

Inasmuch as in each of the remaining instances of Mr. W.'s arguing, that I shall take notice of, he insists upon and urges arguments, which are in like manner against his own scheme, as against mine, I desire, that such a way of arguing may be a little particularly considered.

And here I would lay down this as a maxim of undoubted verity; That an argument, brought to support one scheme against another, can avail nothing to the purpose it is brought for, if it is at the same time against the scheme it would support, in like manner as against that which it would destroy.

It is an old and approved maxim, That argument which proves too much, proves nothing, i. e. If it proves too much for him that brings it—proves against himself in like manner as against his opponent—then it is nothing to help his cause.—The reason of it is plain: The business of a dispute is to make one cause good against another, to make one scale heavier than the other. But when a man uses an argument which takes alike

out of both scales, this does not at all serve to make his side preponderate, but leaves the balance just as it was.

Arguments brought by any man in a dispute, if they be not altogether impertinent, are against the difference between him and his opponent, or against his opponent's differing from him: for wherein there is no difference, there is no dispute.—But that can be no argument against his opponent differing from him, which is only an argument against what is common to both, and taken from some difficulty that both sides equally share in. If I charge supposed absurdities or difficulties against him that differs from me, as an argument to shew the unreasonableness of his differing; and yet the difficulty is not owing to his differing from me, inasmuch as the same would lie against him, if he agreed with me, my conduct herein is both very impertinent and injurious.

If one in a dispute insists on an argument, that lies equally against his own scheme as the other, and yet will stand to it that his argument is good, he in effect stands to it that his own scheme is not good; he supplants himself, and gives up his own cause, in opposing his adversary; in holding fast his argument, he holds fast what is his own overthrow; and in insisting that his argument is solid and strong, he in effect insists that his own scheme is weak and vain. If my antagonist will insist upon it, that his argument is good, that he brings against me, which is in like manner against himself; then I may take the same argument, in my turn, and use it against him, and he can have nothing to answer; but has stopped his own mouth, having owned the argument to be conclusive. Now such sort of arguments as these Mr. W. abundantly uses.

For instance, the argument taken from the whole nation of Israel being called God's people, and every thing that Mr. W. alledges, pertaining to this matter, is in like manner against his own scheme as against mine: And that, let the question be what it will; whether it be about the qualifications which make it lawful for the church to admit, or about the lawfulness of persons coming to sacraments; whether it be about the profession they should make before men, or the internal qualification they must have in the sight of God. And what Mr. W. says to the contrary, does not at all deliver the argument from this embarrassment and absurdity. After all he has said, the argument, if any thing related to the controversy, is plainly this, That because the whole nation of Israel were God's visible people, (which is the same as visible saints,) therefore the scripture notion of visible saintship is of larger extent than mine: and the scripture supposes those to be visible saints, which my scheme does not suppose to be so.

But if this be Mr. W.'s argument, then let us see whether

it agrees any better with his own scheme. Mr. Blake, (Mr. W.'s great author) in his book on the Covenant, (p. 190. *b.*) insists, that Israel at the very *worst* is owned as God's covenant-people, and were called God's people: and (p. 149. *e.*) that all the congregation of Israel, and every one of them, are called holy and God's own people, even Korah and his company. And p. 253. *e.* 254. *a.*) he urges, that every one who is descended from Jacob, even the *worst* of Israel, in their lowest state and condition, were God's people in covenant, called by the name of God's people. And Mr. W. herein follows Mr. Blake, and urges the same thing; that this nation was God's covenant-people, and were called God's people, at the time that they were carried captive into Babylon, (p. 24. *d.*) when they were undoubtedly at their worst, more corrupt than at any other time we read of in the Old Testament; being represented by the prophets, as over-run with abominable idolatries, and other kinds of the most gross, heaven-daring impieties, most obstinate, abandoned, pertinacious and irreclaimable in their rebellion against God, and against his word by his prophets. But yet these, it is urged, are called the people of God; not agreeable to my notion of visible saintship, but agreeable to Mr. W.'s. What his notion of visible saints is, he tells us in p. 139. He there says expressly, that he "does not suppose persons to be visible saints, unless they exhibit a credible profession and visibility of gospel-holiness." Now do those things said about those vile wretches in Israel, agree with this? Did they exhibit moral evidence or gospel-holiness?—But if we bring the matter lower still and say, the true notion of visible saintship is a credible appearance and moral evidence of moral sincerity; does this flagrant, open abandoned, obstinate impiety consist with moral evidence of such sincerity as that? It is apparent, therefore, in Mr. W.'s scheme as mine, that when these are called God's people, it is in some other sense than that wherein the members of the Christian church are called visible saints. And indeed the body of the nation of Israel, in those corrupt times, were so far from being God's church of visibly pious persons, visibly endowed with gospel-holiness, that that people, as to the body of them, were visibly and openly declared by God, to be a whore and a witch, and her children bastards, or children of adultery. Isa. lvii. 3. "Draw near hither, ye sons of the sorceress, the seed of the adulterer and the whore." We have the like in other places. And so the body of the same people in Christ's time—which Mr. W. supposes even then to be branches of the true olive, in the same manner as the members of the Christian church were in the apostles' times—are visibly declared not to be God's children, or children of the true church, but bastards, or an

adulterous brood. Matt. xii. 39. "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; ver. 45. Even so shall it be with this wicked generation." And certainly the people were then, visibly and in the eyes of men, such as Christ had visibly and openly, and in the sight of men, declared them to be.

If the question be not concerning the visibility which makes it lawful for others to admit persons, but concerning the qualifications which render it lawful for them to come, still the objection is no more against my scheme, than against Mr. W.'s. He (in p. 84—86.) says, that such openly scandalous persons ought not to be admitted into the church; insinuating, that these scandalous people among the Jews were otherwise, when they were admitted at first; but that being taken in, and not cast out again, it was lawful for them to be there, and they had a lawful right to the privileges of the church. But this supposition, that all who are lawfully admitted by others, may lawfully come into the church, and lawfully continue to partake of its privileges till cast out, is utterly inconsistent with Mr. W.'s own scheme. For according to his scheme, it is not lawful for men that are not morally sincere, to partake of the privileges of the church; but yet such may in some cases be lawfully admitted by others; for he maintains, that in admitting them, they are not to act as searchers of hearts, even with regard to their moral sincerity; and so argues, (p. 106.) that Christ might give Judas the sacrament, when not morally sincere. If Christ as head of the visible church might admit Judas to his table, when he knew he was not morally sincere, and when it was not lawful for Judas himself to come; then it is lawful for men to admit some, for whom it is not lawful to be there; contrary to Mr. W.'s assertion in p. 86. *b.*

It is true, that persons may become grossly scandalous, after having been regularly admitted on Mr. W.'s principles, on a profession in words of indiscriminate signification. And so they may after being regularly admitted, according to my principles, on a credible profession of gospel-holiness, in words of a determinate meaning: and therefore the gross wickedness of such apostates as we read of in scripture, is no more an objection against my principles, than his.

Just in the same manner is Mr. W.'s arguing, (p. 59—63.) concerning the members of churches mentioned in the Epistles, equally against his own scheme and mine. He largely insists on it, that the apostle speaks of many of them as grossly scandalous, notoriously wicked persons, idolaters, heretics, fornicators, adulterers, adulteresses, &c. &c. In his arguing from these things, he is inconsistent with his own principles, two ways. (1.) Such a character is as plainly inconsistent with the charac-

ter he insists on as necessary to render it lawful for persons themselves to come to sacraments as mine. And (2.) it is utterly inconsistent with what he often declares to be his notion of visible saintship, necessary to a being admitted by others; so no more an argument against my opinion of visible saintship, than his own.

SECT. XII.

The great argument from the Jewish sacraments, of the Passover, *and* Circumcision, *considered.*

As has been observed concerning the argument from the Jewish nation, so the argument from the Jewish ordinances, if it be against my scheme, is as plainly, in every respect, against Mr. W.'s.—This grand argument, as plainly expressed, or implied in Mr. Stoddard's words, (which Mr. W. insists I should attend to,) is this:

God did expressly command all the nation of Israel to be circumcised; and he also expressly commanded the whole nation to come to the passover; excepting such as were ceremonially unclean, or on a journey. Therefore it was lawful for unsanctified men to come. (See Mr. S.'s sermon on the controv. p. 8. and *Appeal*, p. 51.) The want of sanctification never was alleged by any man as a reason for forbearing the passover. (*Appeal*, p. 51.) Unsanctified persons attending this ordinance is never charged on them as a sin in scripture. (Ibid.) Jesus Christ himself partook of the passover with Judas; which proves it to be lawful for unsanctified men to come to the passover. But such as might lawfully come to the passover, may lawfully come to the Lord's supper.

Now let us consider what are the qualifications, which are necessary, according to Mr. W.'s scheme, to a lawful coming to Christian sacraments; and then see whether this objection, in every part of it, and every thing that belongs to it, be not as plainly and directly against his own scheme, as mine.

According to Mr. W. it is not lawful for a man to come unless he is morally sincere. (*Pref.* p. 2. & 3. p. 21. *b.* 25. *d. e.* 30. *d.* 35. *e.* 36. *a.* 111. *b. c.* 115. *b.*) And, according as he has explained that moral sincerity, which is necessary in order to come to sacraments, it implies "a real conviction of the judgment and conscience of the truth of the great things of religion, a deep conviction of a man's undone state without Christ, and an earnest concern to obtain salvation by him,—a fervent desire of Christ and the benefits of the covenant of grace, with an earnest purpose and resolution to seek salvation on the terms of it;—a man's being willing to do the utmost that he can, by the

utmost improvement of his natural and moral power, in the most earnest and diligent use of the ordinances of salvation ;—being resolved for Christ, coming to a point, being engaged for heaven;—having a settled determination of the judgment and affections for God ;—giving up all his heart and life to Christ, &c. &c."* Such moral sincerity as this is necessary, according to Mr. W. to be found in professing Christians, in order to their lawful coming to Christian sacraments. And he says, they are received into the church, on like terms, by entering into covenant in like manner, as the Jews; and that their holiness, both real and federal, is the same with theirs. (p. 56, 57. p. 61. *c.* p. 65. *c.*) So that according to this scheme, none but those that had such qualifications as these, such a sincerity and engagedness in religion as this, might lawfully come to the passover.—But now do the things alledged agree any better with this scheme, than with mine? If the case be so, to what purpose is it alledged, that God, in Numb. ix. expressly commanded all of that perverse, rebellious and obstinate generation in the wilderness, and the whole nation of Israel in all generations, to keep the passover, excepting such as were ceremonially unclean or on a journey, without the exception of any other? Was every one else of such a character as is above described? Was every one under deep convictions, and persons of such earnest engagedness in religion, of such settled strong resolution to give up their utmost strength and all their heart and life to God, &c.? Mr. W. suggests, that those who had not moral sincerity are expressly excepted from the command. (p. 93. *d.*) But I wish he had mentioned the place of scripture. He cites Mr. Stoddard, who says, God appointed sacrifice to be offered for scandal, with confession. But where did God appoint sacrifice, for the want of such sincerity, for the want of such deep conviction, earnest desire, and fixed resolution, as Mr. W. speaks of? And where are such as are without these things, expressly excepted from the command to keep the passover? Besides, there were many scandalous sins, for which no sacrifice was appointed: As David's murder and adultery, and the sin of idolatry—which the nation in general often fell into—and many other gross sins. Nor was there any precept for deferring the keeping of the passover, in case of scandalous wickedness, or moral uncleanness, till there should be opportunity for cleansing by sacrifice, &c. as was in the case of ceremonial uncleanness.

Mr. S. says, The want of sanctification was never alledged by any man as a reason for forbearing the passover. Where do we read in any part of the Bible, that the want of such deep

* P. 10. *d.* 11. *c. d* 30. *c.* 31. *a. e.* 35. *e.* 36. *a.* 53. *b.* 83. *d.* 125. *b.* and many other places.

conviction, &c. as Mr. W. speaks of, or indeed any scandalous moral uncleanness, was ever alledged by any man, as a reason for forbearing to eat the passover?—Mr. S. urges, that unsanctified persons attending the passover was never charged on them as a sin. And where do we read of persons coming without such moral sincerity being any more charged on them as a sin, than the other? We have reason to think, it was a common thing for parents that had no such moral sincerity, yea, that were grossly and openly wicked, to have their children circumcised? for the body of the people were often so: But where is this charged as a sin? Mr. S. says, (Serm. p. 7.) Ishmael was circumcised, but yet a carnal person. And there is as much reason to say, he was not of the character Mr. W. insists on, under deep convictions, having earnest desires of grace, a full and fixed determination, with all his heart, to the utmost of his power, to give his whole life to God, &c. Mr. S. says, (*Serm.* p. 8.) Hezekiah sent to invite the people of Ephraim and Manasseh, and other tribes, to celebrate the passover, though they had lived in idolatry for some ages. But if so, this was as much of an evidence, that they were not of such a character as Mr. W. insists on, as that they were without sanctifying grace.—Mr. W. says, (p. 91. *c.*) The Israelites had carefully attended the seal of circumcision, from the time of its institution, till the departure out of Egypt. But surely most of them at the same time were without Mr. W.'s moral sincerity; for it is abundantly manifest, that the body of the people fell away to idolatry in Egypt. (See Levit. xvii. 7. Josh. xxiv. 14. Ezek. xx. 8. & xxiii. 3. 8. 27.) And there is not the least appearance of any more exception, either in the precepts or history of the Old Testament, of the case of moral insincerity, in such as attended these ordinances, than of ungodliness, or an unsanctified state.

Mr. S. urges, that Jesus Christ himself partook of the passover with Judas; and thence he would argue, that it was lawful for an unregenerate person to partake of the Lord's supper. But there can be no argument, in any sort, drawn from this, to prove that it is unlawful for men to partake of the Lord's supper without sanctifying grace, any more than that it is lawful for them to partake without moral sincerity: for it is every whit as evident that Judas was at that time without moral sincerity, as that he was unregenerate. We have no greater evidence, in all the scripture history, of the moral insincerity of any one man than of Judas, at the time when he partook of the passover with Christ; he having just then bargained with the high priest to betray him, and being then in prosecution of the horrid design of the murder of the Son of God.

If any thing contrary to my principles could be argued from all Israel being required, throughout their generations,

to come to the passover and circumcision, it would be this: That all persons, of all sorts, throughout all Christendom, might lawfully come to baptism and the Lord's supper; godly and ungodly, the knowing and the ignorant, the moral and the vicious, orthodox and heretical, protestants and papists alike. But this does not agree with Mr. W.'s principles any better than with mine.

SECT. XIII.

Concerning Judas's partaking of the Lord's supper.

I think, we have a remarkable instance of tergiversation, in what Mr. W. says in support of the argument from Judas's partaking of the Lord's supper. By those on his side of the question, it is insisted upon, as a clear evidence of its being lawful for unsanctified men to come to the Lord's table, that Christ gave the Lord's supper to Judas, when he knew he was unsanctified. In answer to which I shewed, that this is just as much against their own principles, as mine; because Christ knew as perfectly that he was not morally sincere, as that he was not graciously sincere; and they themselves hold, that it is not lawful for such as are not morally sincere to partake. Mr. W. ridicules this, as very impertinent and strange; because Christ did not know this as head of the visible church, but only as omniscient God and searcher of hearts. And what does this argue? Only, that although Judas was really not fit to come, yet, in as much as Christ, acting as king of the visible church, did not know it, he might admit him; But not, that it was lawful for Judas himself to come, who knew his own heart in this matter, and knew his own perfidiousness and treachery; Mr. W. denies, that it is lawful for such to come, as have no moral sincerity. So that here the question is changed; from who may lawfully come, to who may lawfully be admitted? Mr. W. abundantly insists, that the question is not, who shall be admitted? but, who may lawfully come? Not, whether it be lawful to admit those who have not a visibility of saintship, or do not appear to be true saints? but whether those who are not true saints, may lawfully partake? And this he insists upon in his discourse on this very argument. (p. 104. *c. d.*) And to prove this latter point, viz. That those who are not real saints, may lawfully come, the instance of Judas's coming to the Lord's supper is produced as an undeniable evidence. But when it is answered, that the argument does not prove this, any more than that the morally insincere may lawfully come; because Judas was morally insincere: then Mr. W. (p. 106.) to shelter himself,

evidently changes the question, at once, to that which he had so much exclaimed against as not the question. Now, to serve his turn, the question is not, whether Judas might lawfully come? but, whether Christ might lawfully admit him, acting on a public visibility? And he makes an occasion to cry out against me, as talking strangely, and soon forgetting that I had said, Christ in this matter did not act as searcher of hearts. Whereas, let the question be what it will, the argument from Judas's partaking, (should the fact be supposed,) if it proves any thing relating to the matter, is perfectly, and in every respect, against the one, just as it is against the other. If the question be about profession and visibility to others, and who others may lawfully admit, then Judas's being admitted (if he was admitted) no more proves, that men may be admitted without a visibility and profession of godliness, than without a visibility of moral sincerity. For it no more appears, that he was without a profession and visibility of the former, than of the latter. But if the question is not about visibility to others, or who others may admit, but who may lawfully come, then Judas's coming no more proves, that a man may come without grace, than without moral sincerity; because he was in like manner without both; And Christ knew as perfectly, that he was without the one, as the other; and was not ignorant of the one case, as king of the visible church, any more than of the other. So that there is no way to support this argument, but to hide the question, by shifting and changing it; to have one question in the premises, and to slip in another into the conclusion. Which is according to the course Mr. W. takes. In the premises, (p. 104, 105.) he expressly mentions Mr. S—d's question, as now in view: and agreeably must here have this for his question, whether it was lawful for a man so qualified to come to the Lord's supper? Who, according to Mr. W.'s own doctrine, (p. 111.) ought to act as a discerner of his own heart. But in his conclusion (p. 106.) he has this for his question, whether Christ might lawfully admit a man so qualified, therein not acting as the searcher of hearts?——What shuffling is this!

SECT. XIV.

Concerning that great argument, which Mr. W. urges in various parts of his book, of those being born in the church, who are children of parents that are in covenant.

It is hard to understand distinctly what Mr. W. would be at, concerning this matter, or what his argument is. He often speaks of parents that are in covenant, as born in covenant, and

so born in the church. For to be in covenant, is the same with him as to be members of the visible church. (See p. 93. *c.* 88. *d.* 89. *b.* 59. *e.* 60. *a.* 136. *b.*) And he speaks of them as admitted into the church in their ancestors, and by the profession of their ancestors. (p. 135. *e.* 136. *a.*) Yea, for ought I can see, he holds that they were born members in *complete standing* in the visible church. (p. 3)

And yet he abundantly speaks of their being *admitted* into the church, and *made* members, after they are born, viz. by their baptism. And his words, (unless we will suppose him to speak nonsense,) are such as will not allow us to understand him, merely, that baptism is a sign and public acknowledgment of their having been admitted in their ancestors, in preceding generations. For he speaks of baptism as the *only* rite (or way) of admission into the visible church, applying it to the baptism of children; and as that which *makes* them members of the body of Christ. (p. 99. *c. d.*) And he grants, that it was ordained for the *admission* of the party baptized into the visible church.(p. 99. *e.* p. 100. *a.*) That baptism is an admission; and that they were thus before admitted; (p. 100. *c.*) still speaking of the baptism of infants, and of admission of members into churches.—But surely these things do not harmonize with the doctrine of their first receiving being in the church—as a branch receives being in the tree, and grows in it and from it—or their being born in the covenant, born in the house of God. And yet these repugnant things are uttered as it were in the same breath by Mr. W. (p. 99.) And he joins them together in the same line (p. 46. *e.*) in these words,—"Baptism instituted by him, as a rite of *admission* into his church and being *continued* in covenant with God."—Certainly, being then admitted into the church, and being continued in covenant (or in the church) into which they are admitted before, are not the same thing, nor consistent one with another. If infants are born members in complete standing, as it seems Mr. W. holds, then their baptism does nothing towards making them members; nor is there any need of it to make the matter more complete.

Again (p. 3. *b.* where he also speaks of infants as members having a complete standing in the church) he maintains, that nothing else is requisite in order to communion and privileges of members in complete standing, but only that they should be capable hereof, and should desire the same, and should not be under censure, or scandalously ignorant or immoral. (See also p. 100. *c. d.* to the same purpose.) Mr. W. says this in opposition to my insisting on something further, viz. making a profession of godliness. And yet he himself insists on something further, as much as I; which has been observed before. For

he abundantly insists on a personal, explicit profession and open declaration of believing that the gospel is indeed the revelation of God, and of a hearty consent to the terms of the covenant of grace, &c. And speaks of the whole controversy as turning upon that single point, of the degree of evidence to be given, and the kind of profession to be made, whether in words of indiscriminate meaning. (See p. 5. *b. c.* p. 6. *c. d.*) And consequently not whether they must make any profession at all, having been completely admitted before, in the profession of their ancestors.

Therefore, if the infants of visible believers are born in the church, and are already members in complete standing, and do not drop out of the church, and fall from a complete standing, when they grow up; and therefore if they are not ignorant nor immoral, and desire full communion, nothing else can be required of them: And it will hence follow, contrary to my principles, that they cannot be required to make a profession in words of discriminate meaning: But then, it also equally follows, contrary to his principles, that neither can they be required to make a profession in words of indiscriminate meaning. If nothing else besides those fore-mentioned things is necessary, then no profession is necessary, in any words at all, neither of determinate nor indeterminate signification. So that Mr. W. in supposing some personal profession to be necessary, gives up and destroys this grand argument.

But if he did not give it up by this means, it would not be tenable on other principles belonging to his scheme; such as its being necessary in order to a being admitted to sacraments, that persons should have a visibility that reccommends them to the reasonable judgment and apprehension of the minds of others, as true Christians, really pious persons, and that there should be such a profession as exhibits moral evidence of this. For who will say, that the individual profession of an ancestor, a thousand or fifteen hundred years ago, is a credible exhibition and moral evidence of the real piety of his present posterity, without any personal explicit profession of any thing about religion, in any one of the succeeding generations. And if Mr. W. had not said, there must be a credible exhibition of gospel-holiness, but only some common faith or virtue; yet no such thing is made visible to a rational judgment and apprehension of mind, by this means. How, for instance, does it make orthodoxy visible? What reasonable ground is there in it, at such a day as this in England, to believe concerning any man, that he believes the doctrine of the Trinity, and all other fundamental doctrines, with full conviction, and with all his heart, because he descended from an ancestor that made a good profession, when the ancient Britons or Saxons were converted from Heathenism, and because

withal he is free from open scandalous immorality, and appears willing to attend duties of public worship? If an attendance on these public duties was in its own nature a profession of orthodoxy, or even piety; yet the reason of mankind teaches them the need of joining words and actions together in public manifestations of the mind, in cases of importance: Speech being the great and peculiar talent, which God has given to mankind, as the special means and instrument of the manifestation of their minds one to another. Thus, treaties of peace among men are not concluded and finished, only with actions, without words. Feasting together was used of old, as a testimony of peace and covenant friendship; as between Isaac and Abimelech, Laban and Jacob, but not without a verbal profession. Giving the hand, delivering the ring, &c. are to express a marriage agreement and union; but still a profession in words is annexed. So we allow it to be needful, after persons have fallen into scandal, that in manifesting repentance there should be a verbal profession, besides attending duties of worship. Earthly princes will not trust a profession of allegiance, in actions only, such as bowing, kneeling, keeping the king's birth-day, &c.; but they require also a profession in words, and an oath of allegiance is demanded. Yea, it is thought to be reasonably demanded, in order to men's coming to the actual possession and enjoyment of those privileges, they are born heirs to. Thus, the eldest sons of noblemen in Great Britain, are born heirs to the honours and estate of their fathers; yet this no way hinders but they may be obliged, when they come to ripeness of age, in order to being invested in the actual possession, to take the oath of allegiance: though in order to their lawfully doing it, it may be necessary they should believe in their hearts, that king George is the lawful prince, and that they should not be enemies to him, and friends to the pretender.

But moreover, if this objection of Mr. W. about infants being born in the church be well considered, it will appear to be all beside the question, and so nothing to the purpose. It is not to the purpose of either of the questions, Mr. W.'s or mine. The question as I have stated it, is concerning them that may be admitted members in complete standing; not about them that have a complete standing in the church already, and so are no candidates for admission; which he says, is the case of these infants. And the question, as he often states it, is concerning them that may lawfully come. And this objection, from infants being born in the church, as it must be understood from Mr. W. does not touch this question. For when Mr. W. objects, that some persons are born in the church, and therefore may lawfully come to sacraments, he cannot be understood to mean, that their being born in the church alone is sufficient: but that, besides this,

persons must have some virtue or religion, of one sort or other, in order to their lawful coming. For he is full in it, that it is not lawful for men to come without moral virtue and sincerity. Therefore the question comes to this in the result: Seeing persons, besides their being born in covenant, must have some sort of virtue and religion, in order to a lawful coming to the Lord's supper, what sort of virtue and religion that is, whether common or saving? Now this question is not touched by the present objection. Merely persons being born in covenant, is no more evidence of their having moral sincerity, than saving grace. Yea, there is more reason to suppose the latter, than the former without it, in the infant children of believing parents. For the scripture gives us ground to think, that some infants have the habit of saving grace, and that they have a new nature given them. But no reason at all to think, that ever God works any mere moral change in them, or infuses any habits of moral virtue without saving grace. And we know, they cannot come by moral habits in infancy, any other way than by immediate infusion. They cannot obtain them by human instruction, nor contract them by use and custom. And especially there is no reason to think, that the children of such as are visible saints, according to Mr. W.'s scheme, have any goodness infused into them by God, of any kind. For in his scheme, all that are morally sincere may lawfully receive the privileges of visible saints: but we have no scripture grounds to suppose, that God will bless the children of such parents as have nothing more than moral sincerity, with either common or saving grace. There are no promises of the covenant of grace made to such parents, either concerning themselves, or their children. The covenant of grace is a conditional covenant; as both sides in this controversy suppose. And therefore, by the supposition, men have no title to the promises without the condition. And as saving faith is the condition, the promises are all made to that, both those which respect persons themselves, and those that respect their seed. As it is with many covenants or bargains among men; by these, men are often entitled to possessions for themselves and their heirs: Yet they are entitled to no benefits of the bargain, neither for themselves, nor their children, but by complying with the terms of the bargain. So with respect to the covenant of grace, the apostle says, (Acts ii. 39.) The promise is to you and to your children. So the apostle says to the jailer, (Acts xvi. 31.) Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And we find many promises, all over the Bible, made to the righteous, that God will bless their seed for their sakes. Thus, Psal. cxii. 2. The generation of the upright shall be blessed. Psal. lxix. 35, 36. For God will save Zion;—The seed also of his servants shall inherit it; and

they that love his name shall dwell therein. (See also Prov. xiv. 26. Psal. cii. 28. Psal. ciii. 17, 18. Exod. xx. 5, 6. Deut. vii. 9.) Supposing these to be what are called indefinite promises; yet do they extend to any but the seed of the righteous? Where are any such promises made to the children of unsanctified men, the enemies of God, and slaves of the devil, (as Mr. W. owns all unsanctified men are,) whatever moral sincerity and common religion they may have?

The baptism of infants is the seal of these promises made to the seed of the righteous: and on these principles, some rational account may be given of infant baptism; but there is no account can be given of it on Mr. W.'s scheme, no warrant can be found for it in scripture; for they are promises, that are the warrant for privileges: but there are no promises of God's word to the seed of morally sincere men, and only half Christians. Thus this argument of Mr. W.'s, let us take it which way we will, has nothing but what is as much, yea, much more, against his scheme, than against mine.

However, if this were not the case, but all the shew or pretence of strength there is in the argument, lay directly and only against me, yet the strength of it, if tried, will avail to prove nothing at all. The pretended argument, so far as I can find it out, is this: The children of visible saints are born in covenant; and being already in covenant, they must have a right to the privileges of the covenant, without any more ado: such therefore have a right to come to the Lord's supper, whether they are truly godly or not.

But the shew of argument there is here, depends on the ambiguity of the phrase, being in covenant; which signifies two distinct things: either (1.) Being under the obligation and bond of the covenant; or, (2.) Being conformed to the covenant, and complying with the terms of it. Being the subject of the obligations and engagements of the covenant, is a thing quite distinct from being conformed to these obligations, and so being the subject of the conditions of the covenant.

Now it is not being in covenant in the former, but the latter sense, that gives a right to the privileges of the covenant. The reason is plain, because compliance and conformity to the terms of a covenant, is the thing which gives right to all the benefits; and not merely being under ties to that compliance and conformity. Privileges are not annexed merely to obligations, but to compliance with obligations.

Many that do not so much as visibly comply with the conditions of the covenant, are some of God's covenant-people in that sense, that they are under the bonds and engagements of the covenant: so were Korah and his company; so were many gross idolators in Israel, that lived openly in that sin; and so

may heretics, deists, and atheists, be God's covenant-people. They may still be held under the bonds of their covenant engagements to God; for their great wickedness and apostacy does not free them from the obligation of the solemn promises and engagments they formerly entered into. But yet being in covenant merely in this sense, gives them no right to any privileges of the covenant. In order to that, they must be in covenant in another sense; they must cordially consent to the covenant; which indeed Mr. W. himself owns, when he acknowledges, that in order to come to sacraments, men must profess a cordial consent to, and compliance with the conditions of the covenant of grace.* And if Mr. W. inquires, Why those children that were born in the covenant, are not cast out, when in adult age they make no such profession; certainly, it as much concerns him to answer, as me; for it is as much his doctrine, as mine, that they must profess such consent.—But I am willing to answer nevertheless.—They are not cast out, because it is a matter held in suspense, whether they do cordially consent to the covenant, or not; or whether their making no such profession do not arise from some other cause. And none are to be excommunicated, without some positive evidence against them. And therefore they are left in the state they were in, in infancy, not admitted actually to partake of the Lord's supper, (which actual participation is a new positive privilege,) for want of a profession, or some evidence, beyond what is merely negative, to make it visible that they do consent to the covenant. For it is reasonable to expect some appearance more than what is negative, of a proper qualification, in order to being admitted to a privilege beyond what they may have hitherto actually received. A negative charity may be sufficient for a negative privilege, such as freedom from censure and punishment; but something more than a negative charity, is needful to actual admission to a new positive privilege.

* If it be said here, Those who have been born of baptized ancestors, though they do not comply with the terms of the covenant, are in covenant, in this sense, that they have a right to the promises of the covenant conditionally, in case they will hereafter comply: I answer, So are all mankind in covenant; God may be said to have bound himself to them all conditionally; and many have these promises declared to them, that still remain Jews, Mahometans, or Heathens.

SECT. XV.

A particular examination of Mr. W.'s defence of the ninth objection, or that boasted argument, that if it be not lawful for unconverted *men to come to the Lord's supper, then none may come but they that* know *themselves to be converted.*

This argument has been greatly gloried in, as altogether invincible. Mr. W. seems to have been alarmed, and his spirits raised to no small degree of warmth at the pretence of an answer to it: and he uses many big words, and strong expressions in his reply; such as, It is absolutely certain—It is beyond my power to comprehend, and I believe beyond the power of any man to tell me—this I assert, and stand to—as plain as the sun—a contradiction of the Bible, of the light of nature, and of the common sense of mankind, &c. &c. But let us get away from the noise of a torrent, and bring this matter to the test of calm reasoning, and examine it to the very bottom.

Here let it be considered, wherein precisely the argument consists.—If it has any strength in it, it consists in this proposition: viz That it is not lawful for men to come to sacraments. without a known right. This is the proposition Mr. S. himself reduces the argument to, in his Appeal, p. 62, 63. And it is very evident, that the whole strength of the argument rests on the supposed truth of this proposition.

And here let it be noted, what sort of knowledge of a right Mr. S. and Mr. W. mean in this argument. It is knowledge as distinguished from such an opinion, or hope, as is founded on probability. Thus Mr. S. expressly insists, that a man must not only *think* he has a right, but he must *know* it.—(Appeal, p. 62.) And again, (p. 63.) Probable hopes will not warrant him to come.

Mr. W. uses many peremptory strong expressions, (p. 109.) to set forth the certainty of that which never was denied) viz. That a man cannot know he has a right, unless he knows he has the qualification which gives him a right. But this is not the thing in question: the point is, Whether a man may not have a lawful right, or may not lawfully come, and yet not know his right, with such a knowledge and evidence as is beyond probability? This is the thing asserted, and herein lies the argument. And the negative of this cannot be maintained, in order to maintain Mr. W.'s scheme, without the grossest absurdity: it being a position, which, according to scripture

reason, Mr. S.'s doctrine, and Mr. W.'s own, effectually destroys his scheme.

To this purpose, I observed, If this proposition be true, that no man may come, save he who not only thinks, but knows he has a right, then it will follow, that no unconverted person may come, unless he knows that doctrine to be true, That unconverted men may have a right. Because an unconverted man cannot know, that he himself has a right, unless he knows that doctrine which Mr. S. maintained, to be true, viz. That men may have a right, though they are unconverted. And consequently no one unconverted man may lawfully come to the Lord's supper, unless he is so knowing in this point of controversy, as not only to think, and have probable evidence, that this opinion is right, but knows it to be so.—Mr. W. endeavours to help the matter by a distinction of different kinds of knowledge: and by the help of this distinction would make it out, that common people in general, and even boys and girls of sixteen years old, may with ease know, that his doctrine about unsanctified men's lawful coming to the Lord's supper, is true. And we must understand him, (as he is defending Mr. S.'s argument,) that they may know it with that evidence which is distinguished from probability; and this according to Mr. W. himself, is certainty; which he speaks of as above a thousand probabilities. (See p. 118. *c.*) but how miserable is this; to pretend, that his doctrine about qualifications for sacraments, is so far from a disputable point, that it is of such plain and obvious evidence to common people, and even children, that without being studied in divinity, they may not only think it to be exceeding probable, but know it to be true! When it is an undeniable fact, that multitudes of the greatest ability and piety that have spent their lives in the study of the Holy Scriptures, have never so much as thought so.

Again, I observed, that according to Mr. S.'s doctrine, not one unconverted man in the world can know, that he has warrant to come to the Lord's supper; because, if he has any warrant, God has given him warrant in the scriptures: and therefore if any unconverted man, not only thinks, but knows, that he has warrant from God, he must of consequence not only think, but know the scriptures to be the word of *God*. Whereas it was the constant doctrine of Mr. S. that no unconverted man knows the scriptures to be the word of God.*—But Mr. W. would

* I did not say, that it was also a doctrine according to scripture; for there was no occasion for this, among those with whom I had chiefly to do in this controversy; with whom I knew it was a point as much settled and uncontroverted, as any doctrine of Mr. S. whatever. And I knew it to be the current doctrine of orthodox divines; who ever allow this doctrine to be implied in such texts as those, John xvii. 7. 1. John iv. 15, 16. chap. v. 1. 10. and many others.

make it out, that Mr. S. did hold, unconverted men might know the scriptures to be the word of God; but only not know it with a gracious knowledge, such as effectually bowed men's hearts, and influenced them to a gracious obedience. (p. 113. *b.*) But let us see whether it was so or not. Mr. S. in his *Nature of Saving Conversion*, (p. 73.) says, "The carnal man is ignorant of the divine authority of the word of God;—His wound is, that he does not know certainly the divine authority of these institutions; he does not know but they are the inventions of men." Again, (ibid. p. 74.) he says, "The carnal man is uncertain of those things that are the foundation of his reasonings. He thinks, there is a great probability of the truth of these things; but he has no assurance. His principles are grounded on an uncertain proposition." And he observes, (p. 20.) "Men when converted, do not look on it as probable, that the word is his word, as they did before; but they have assurance of the truth of it." —So elsewhere, (*Guide to Christ*, p. 26.) "They that have not grace, do not properly believe the word of *God*."—And in another book, (*Safety of Ap.* p. 6.) "The gospel always works effectually where it is believed and received as the truth of *God*." —In another book, (*Benef. of the Gosp.* p. 149.) "Common illumination does not convince men of the truth of the gospel." —in his discourse on the *virtue of Christ's blood*, (p. 27.) speaking of such as have no interest in the blood of Christ, he says, "They are strangers to the divine authority of the word of *God*." Again, (*ibid.* p. 16.) "Before [i. e. before saving faith] they were at a loss whether the word was the word of *God*."—To the like purpose are many other passages in his writings. (See *Nat. of Sav. Conv.* p.. 72. *Safety of Ap. p.* 6, 7. 99. 107. 186, 187. 229. —*Benef. of the Gosp.* p. 89.)

So that here, if it be true, that some unconverted men have a divine warrant to come to the Lord's supper; and if the thing which is the foundation of this argument, be also true, viz. That in order to men's warrantably coming to the Lord's supper, they must not only think but know they have a right; then it must be true likewise, that they not only think but know, that the scripture, wherein this warrant is supposed to be delivered, is the word of *God*. And then we have the following propositions to make hang together: That unconverted men are ignorant of the scriptures being the word of God, are uncertain of it, have no assurance of it, are not convinced of it, do not properly believe it, are at a loss whether it be the word of God, or not; and yet they not only think, but know, that the scriptures are the word of God, and that the gospel, which is the charter of all Christian privileges, is divine; they have a know-

ledge of it which is above all probable hope or thought, and attended with evidence above a thousand probabilities.

And now let it be considered, whether this agrees better with Mr. W.'s own doctrine, concerning men's knowing the truth and divine authority of the gospel, in what has been before cited from his sermons on *Christ a King and Witness:* where he expressly says, that man, since the fall, is ignorant of divine truth, and full of prejudices against it: has a view of the truth contained in the Bible, as a doubtful uncertain thing; receives it as what is probably true; sees it as a probable scheme, and something likely to answer the end proposed: but that after conversion it appears divinely true and real. (See p. 114, 115. & 144.) Then unconverted men only looked on the truth of the word of God, as probable, something likely, yet as a doubtful uncertain thing; but now they not only think, but know it to be true.

No distinction, about the different kinds of knowledge, or the various ways of knowing, will ever help these absurdities, or reconcile such inconsistencies. If there be any such sort of knowing, as is contra-distinguished to probable thinking, and to such opinion as is built on a thousand probabilities, which yet is inconsistent with being ignorant, not believing, being uncertain, nor assured, nor convinced, only looking on a thing probable, looking on it doubtful and uncertain, it must certainly be a new and very strange sort of knowledge.

But this argument, that is so clear and invincible, must have such supports as these, or must quite sink to the earth. It is indeed a remarkable kind of argument. It is not only as much against the scheme it is brought to support, as against that which it would confute; but abundantly more so. For if it were the case in truth, that none might come to the Lord's supper, but they that know they have a right, yet it would be no direct and proper proof, that unconverted men might come. It would indeed prove, that many godly men might not come: Which, it is true, would bring some difficulty on the scheme opposed; yet would be no proof against it. But it is direct and perfect demonstration against the scheme it would support: It demonstrates, according to the scripture, and according to the doctrine of those that urge the argument, that not one unconverted man in the world may lawfully come to the Lord's supper; as no one of them certainly knows the gospel to be divine, and so no one knows the charter to be authentic, in which alone the right of any to Christian privileges is conveyed: hence no one unsanctified man is sure of his right; and therefore (as they draw the consequence) no one unsanctified man may come to the Lord's supper. And so it follows, that the more strongly

Mr. W. stands to this argument, the more peremptory and confident his expressions are concerning it, the more violently and effectually does he supplant himself.

And this position, that a man must not take any privilege, till he not only thinks, but knows he has a right, is not only unreasonable, as used by Mr. W. against me, when indeed it is ten times as much against himself; but it is unreasonable in itself, as it is an argument, which if allowed and pursued, will prove, that a man may do nothing at all, never move hand or foot, for his own advantage, unless he first, not only thinks, but knows, it is his duty. Mr. W. himself owns (p. 116.) that all the duties, which God requires of us in his instituted worship, are privileges, as well as the Lord's supper: And so is every other duty, which we are to do for our own benefit. But all human actions are, upon the whole, either good or evil: every thing that we do as rational creatures, is either a duty, or a sin; and the neglect of every thing that is our duty, is forbidden. So that we must never so much as take a step, or move a finger, upon only a probable judgment and hope; but must first know it to be our duty, before we do it: nay, we must neither move, nor voluntarily forbear to move, without a certainty of our duty in the case, one way or other!

As to its being alike difficult for men to know or be assured of their moral sincerity, as of their real sanctification, I shall speak to that under the next head; whereby it will appear again, another way, that this argument is vastly more against Mr. W.'s scheme, than mine.

SECT. XVI.

A consideration of Mr. W.'s defence of the tenth objection, against the doctrine of the unlawfulness of unsanctified men coming to the Lord's supper, that it tends to the great perplexity and torment of many godly men in their attendance on this ordinance.

My first reply to this objection was that it is for want of like tenderness of conscience, that the other doctrine which insists on moral sincerity, does not naturally bring such as are received on those principles, into as great perplexities.—Mr. W. in his animadversions upon it, says, "This is an assertion which I take to be contrary to common sense, and the experience of mankind; and the allowing of it to be true, must overthrow the law of nature, and cast infinite reproach upon the author of it."

These are strong expressions; but let us bring the matter

to the test of reason.—The necessary qualification, on Mr. W.'s principles, is moral sincerity, and a certain degree of moral sincerity. For there is scarcely any man, that lives under the light of the gospel, and is not an atheist, or deist, but what has some degree of moral sincerity, in some things pertaining to Christianity and his duty; some degree of common faith, some degree of conviction of the need of Christ, some desire of him, and moral willingness, though from selfish considerations, to be good; and some purpose to endeavour a conformity to the covenant of grace, and to seek salvation on the terms of it. But how; shall a man know, what is a sufficient degree of these things? Mr. W. has determined the matter thus; that his belief of the doctrine of the gospel, and moral willingness to be conformed to the covenant of grace, must be with his *whole* heart, (p. 49. *e.* p. 5. *c.* 36. *a.*) and that his conviction of his undone state without Christ must be deep; and his desire of Christ and his benefits fervent, and his purpose earnest, (p. 75. *e.* p. 11. *c.*) so as to induce him to enter into covenant with *all* the earnestness he can, and engage him to use endeavours with *all* the strength and power that he has. (p. 83. *e.* p. 32. *d.* p. 36. *a.*)

Now how exceeding difficult must it be for unsanctified men to determine, with any assurance, whether they have moral sincerity to such a degree?—How difficult for them to know, whether their convictions are thus deep? Every one that is used to deal with souls under conviction, knows, that when they are indeed under deep convictions, they are especially apt to complain of the hardness of their hearts, and to think their convictions are not deep.—How difficult to determine, with any assurance, whether their assent rises so high, that they can truly be said to believe with all their hearts? Whether their moral willingness to be conformed to the covenant of grace, be with their whole heart? And whether they are really engaged with all the solicitude they can, and are willing to do all that they can? These things, I am pretty sure, are of vastly more difficult determination, than whether a man has any true holiness, or not. For in the former case, the determination is concerning the degree of things, that are capable of an infinite variety of degrees; some of which are nearer to, and others are further from, the lowest sufficient degree: and consequently some of the degrees that are not sufficient, may yet be very near; which renders the matter of very difficult determination; unspeakably more so, that when what is to be distinguished, is the nature of things, which in all degrees is widely diverse, and even contrary to that which it is to be distinguished from: As is the case between saving and common grace; which Mr. W. himself

acknowledges.* It is more easy to distinguish light from darkness, than to determine the precise degree of light: and so it is more easy to determine, whether a man be alive or dead, than whether there be exactly such a certain degree of vigour and liveliness.

This moral sincerity, which Mr. W. insists on, is a most indeterminate uncertain thing; a phrase without any certain precise meaning; and must for ever remain so. It being not determined, how much men must be morally sincere; how much they must believe with a moral sincerity; whether the deeply awakened and convinced sinner must believe, that God is absolutely sovereign with respect to his salvation, and that Christ is perfectly sufficient to save him in particular; and to what degree of moral assent and consent, he must believe and embrace these things, and comply with the terms of the covenant of grace; whether he must be willing to obey all God's commands, the most difficult, as well as the most easy, and this in all circumstances, even the most difficult that can arise in Providence; or whether only in some circumstances; and what, and how many. The scripture gives us many infallible rules, by which to distinguish between saving grace, and common. But I know of no rules given in the Bible, by which men may certainly determine this precise degree of moral sincerity. So that if grace is not the thing which gives a right to sacraments in the sight of God, we have no certain rule in the Bible, commensurate to the understanding of mankind, by which to determine when we have a right, and when not.—Now let the impartial reader judge, which scheme lays the greatest foundation for perplexity to communicants, of tender consciences, concerning their qualifications for the Lord's supper; and whether this argument drawn from such a supposed tendency to such perplexity, (if there be any force in it,) is not vastly more against Mr. W.'s scheme, than mine.

And here by the way, let it be noted, that by these things it is again demonstrated, that the ninth objection, the great argument considered in the preceding section, concerning the necessity of a known right, in order to a lawful partaking, is exceedingly more against Mr. W.'s principles, than mine; in as much as on his principles, it is so much more difficult for men to know, whether they have a right, or have the prescribed qualification, or not.

I answered this argument in the second place, by alledging, that this doctrine of the necessity of saving grace in order to a

* See his Sermon on *Christ a King and Witness*, (p. 84. *e.*) where he says, "notwithstanding the visible likeness of nominal and real Christians, there is a wide difference, as there is between the subjects of *Christ* and the slaves of the devil."

right to the Lord's supper, is not properly the cause of the perplexities of doubting saints in their attendance on this ordinance, though it may be the occasion: But that their own negligence and sin is the true cause; and that this doctrine is no more the cause of these perplexities, than the doctrine of the necessity of saving grace in order to salvation, is the cause of the perplexity of doubting saints when they come to die. Upon which Mr. W. says, There is no shadow of resemblance of these cases, because death is no ordinance, &c. But if death is no ordinance, yet it is the required duty of the saints to yield themselves to the Lord, and resign to the will of God, in their death. And in this respect, the cases are exactly parallel, that perplexities are just so much the consequence of the respective doctrines, in one case, as in the other; that is, the perplexities of a doubting saint on a death-bed, the difficulty and trouble he meets with in resigning himself to the will of God in dying, is just in the same manner the consequence of the doctrine of the necessity of saving grace in order to eternal salvation, as the perplexities of a doubting saint at the Lord's table are the consequence of the doctrine of the necessity of saving grace in order to a right to the Lord's supper. And this is sufficient for my purpose.

Mr. W. himself says, in his answer to Mr. Croswell, (p. 122. *c.*) "Although there are comparatively few, that obtain assurance, yet it is through their own sloth and negligence that they do not. We fully agree with Mr. Perkins, that a man in this life may ordinarily be infallibly certain of his salvation. "So Mr. Stoddard (in his sermon on *one good sign*—) says, "There is no necessity, that the people of God should lie under darkness and temptation; they may obtain assurance."—Now, if this be the case, then certainly there is no justice in laying the temptation and uneasiness, which is the effect of sloth and negligence, to the doctrine I maintain, in those that embrace it. It is a wise dispensation of God, that he has so ordered things, that comfort in ordinances, and in all duties, and under all providences, should be to be obtained in a way of diligence; and that slothfulness should be the way to perplexity and uneasiness, and should be a way hedged up with thorns, agreeable to Prov. xv. 19.—That it is so ordered, is for the good of the saints, as it tends to turn them out of this thorny path, into the way of diligence. And so this doctrine, as it has this tendency, has a tendency in the end to that solid peace and comfort, which is the happy fruit of their holy diligence. And that, and not the saints' perplexity, is properly the effect of this doctrine.

SECT. XVII.

Containing some further observations on what is said by Mr. W. in support of the 13th objection, concerning God's commanding all the members of the visible church, that are not ignorant nor scandalous, to attend all external covenant duties.

It has been already demonstrated (sect. 8th of this third part) that in this argument the question is begged, notwithstanding what Mr. W. has said to the contrary; which sufficiently overthrows the whole argument. Nevertheless, that I may pass by nothing, which those who are on Mr. W.'s side may be likely to think material; I will here make some further observations on this objection, as represented and supported by Mr. W.

The chief thing, that has the plausible appearance of argument in what Mr. S. and Mr. W. say on this head, is this: That for God to require all who are in covenant to come to the Lord's supper, and yet to forbid them to come unconverted, is to suppose, that he both commands them and forbids them at the same time. And this is thought to be the more manifest, inasmuch as conversion is not in men's power. Though it is not denied, but that God justly requires men to be converted, or to be truly holy, (see p. 129, 130.)

To this I would say,

(1.) If when they speak of commanding and forbidding at the same time, they mean God's commanding and forbidding the same thing, at the same time, no such consequence follows from my principles. For that thing, and that only, which I suppose God requires of any, is to come to the Lord's supper with a sanctified heart; and that this God requires at all times, and never forbids at any time; and that to come without this qualification, is what he always forbids, and requires at no time. So that what he requires, at the same time he forbids something, is not the same thing that he forbids; but a very different and contrary one. And it is no absurdity, to suppose, that God requires one thing, and forbids a contrary thing at the same time.

To illustrate this by an example: It was the duty of the Jews at Jerusalem, openly to confess *Christ*, to own him as the Messiah, at that hour when he was led away to be crucified, and openly to testify their adoring respect to him on that extraordinary occasion. But yet they did not believe him to be the Messiah, and could not believe it, (many of them at least,) since they looked on his present abject circumstances as a demonstration that he was not the Messiah. It was beyond their power.

at least at once, in that instant, to give their assent, with all their hearts, to such a supposition. Nor was it in their power to exercise an adoring respect to him: for, besides their strong prejudices, most of them were judicially hardened, and given up to a spirit of unbelief and obstinate rejection of him; as appears by that account, (John xii. 39, 40.) "Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart, that they should not see with their eyes," &c. (See also Luke xix. 41, 42. and Matt. xiii. 14, 15.) And yet it would have been unlawful for them to have made a lying profession; to profess they believed him to be the Messiah, and that they received and loved him as such, when at the same time they hated him, and did not believe he was the Messiah.—But here is no requiring and forbidding the same thing at the same time: for the only thing required of them was, to have faith and love, and to testify it; which was not at all forbidden.

(2.) None of the difficulties, which Mr. S. or Mr. W. object—either God's supposed requiring impossibilities, or his requiring and forbidding at the same time—do follow, any more on my principles, than on Mr. W.'s. Mr. W. maintains, that God calls men this moment to enter into covenant with him, and commands them to do it. (p. 28. *c.*) One thing implied in this, according to his own frequent explanation of visibly entering into covenant, is professing a belief of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity. Now therefore, we will suppose a man to be a candidate for baptism, who has been brought up in Arianism; and is strongly persuaded, that the doctrine of the *Trinity* is not true: Yet he is this moment required to profess that doctrine; but has no ability in a moment to believe the doctrine, because he does not at present see the evidence of it. For as Mr. W. himself says, (Sermon on *Christ a King and Witness*, p. 91. *d. e.* and 92. *a.*) "The understanding cannot be brought to yield its assent to any truth, which it does not see the truth or apprehend the evidence of.——If you would hire him with cart-loads or ship-loads of gold and silver; if you should imprison him, whip him, burn him; you cannot make him believe a thing to be true, which he apprehends to be incredible, or which he sees no sufficient reason to believe." Now therefore what shall the man do, on Mr. W.'s principles? He is commanded to profess the doctrine of the Trinity, which must be professed in order to be lawfully baptized in the name of the Trinity; and on Mr. W.'s principles, he is commanded to do it this moment. Yet also on his principles, if the man professes it, and is not morally sincere, or knows he does not believe it, he is guilty of horrible falsehood and prevarication; which God doubtless forbids. Therefore here is certainly as much of

an appearance of commanding and forbidding the same thing at the same time, as in the other case.

Every husbandman in Israel, that lived even in Christ's time, was required to offer a basket of the first-fruits; and was commanded when he offered it, solemnly to make that profession, concerning the principal facts relating to the redemption out of Egypt,—which is prescribed in Deut. xxvi. 5—10. A Syrian ready to perish was my father, &c. Now supposing there had been an Israelite, who did not believe the truth of all these facts, which came to pass so many ages before, (as there are now many in Christendom, who do not believe the facts concerning Jesus Christ,) and continued in his unbelief, till the very moment of his offering: God peremptorily requires him to make this profession; yet none will say, that he may lawfully profess these things, at the same time when he does not believe them to be true. However, here is no commanding and forbidding the same thing at the same time: Because, though God required the Jews to make this profession, yet the thing required was to believe it and profess it. Though some might not believe it, nor be able for the present to believe it; yet this inability arose from depravity and wickedness of heart, which did not at all excuse their unbelief, for one moment.* Mr. W. himself owns (p. 129. *b. c.*) that God may require those things which are out of men's natural power.

Now this may be laid down as a truth of easy and plain evidence; If God may require what wicked men, while such, are unable to perform, then he may also require those things which are connected with it, and dependent on it, and which, if the other be done, they would be able to do, and might do, and without which they may not do it. So, if God may require an unsanctified man to love him, then he may require him to testify and profess his love, as I suppose Christians do in the act

* This instance may shew us, that God's requiring all Israel to enter into covenant with God, and seal their covenant in the passover, will not prove, that it was lawful for any to avouch the Lord to be their God, and promise and swear they would perform universal and persevering obedience, when at the same moment they had no love to God, and even then, while speaking the words, continued in an habitual wilful disobedience to God's commands, and were willing slaves to the devil. Nor will it follow, from these commands given to the Israelites, concerning their covenanting with God, and sealing their covenant, that God ever did, since the foundation of the world, appoint or command any other covenanting with him, than as giving up themselves wholly and without reserve, both soul and body, both heart and life; or that ever he appointed or commanded any covenanting wherein men give a part, and keep back a part, give him the outside, and keep back the noblest and best part, the heart, will, and affections, for sin and Satan; or that there is any such covenant of God in being; or that such covenanting has not always been as much without foundation in any institution of God, as any of the spurious sacraments of the church of Rome; or that it has not always been strictly forbidden of God; or that it is not absolutely and in itself sinful and unlawful, as truly as the act of Ananias and Sapphira.

of partaking of the Lord's supper; and yet it may not be lawful for him to testify and profess love, when he has it not.*

* Much of the controversy discussed in this book (and the preceding one) which was agitated with great warmth in the American churches, and which is not unfrequently started among congregational churches in Great Britain, seems to originate in the want of clearly stating the scriptural design of entering into full communion. If this be not previously settled, there is but little hope of a satisfactory adjustment. Without entering here into the minutiæ of proofs, the following particulars are submitted to the reader's consideration, as probably calculated to aid his inquiries.

1. The chief end of every human society, as well as of every intelligent being, ought to be this, viz. To glorify God or to represent him as glorious in all his perfections and ways. No human society, of whatever kind, is exempt from this obligation. For a society is only an aggregate of individuals; and as every individual is obliged to do this in all his actions, he is therefore thus obliged in his social capacity. This obligation arises from the respective natures of God and the creature, and it is clearly enjoined in the holy scripture. "Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."—But,

2. The distinguishing subordinate end or special design of any society, must designate its peculiar nature, whereby it is best adapted to promote that end. Though every society is bound to seek the one chief end, yet every social union is not adapted to answer all social ends. Societies of a religious, moral, charitable, scientific, or political design, must have members of a corresponding character, otherwise the proposed end cannot be answered. The qualifications of the members must have an aptitude to promote the design.

3. The distinguishing design of a society denominated a church, evidently is to promote religion. Numbers are united, by divine appointment, to maintain religion—to exhibit before the world real Christianity—to encourage those who seek the right way—to edify one another—and the like. Such particulars we gather from the sacred scriptures. "Striving together for the faith of the gospel."—"That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God (resembling him) without rebuke (or cause of rebuke) in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life."—A church of Christ is appointed to shine in a dark world, to be blameless and harmless among the crooked and perverse, to imitate God, as far as practicable, while among the children of the wicked one, to give no offence to who are without or those who are within the church, to hold forth, and hold fast, the word of life by doctrine, by discipline, and by practice. "Him that is weak in the faith receive you, but not to doubtful disputations." Provided a person be desirous of Christian fellowship, and is possessed of so much knowledge, so much experienced efficacy of truth, and so much good conduct, as is calculated to answer, in a prevailing degree, the design of a church being at all formed, let him not be rejected. "Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do!" This is done by mutual instructions, exhortations, prayers, and praises; by watchful discipline, and the exercise of religious gifts; by friendly offices, and acts of Christian kindness.

4. The preceding particulars are produced only as instances: but in order accurately to ascertain the special end of Christian fellowship, in full communion, all the passages contained in the New Testament relating to the subject ought to be included. For until the revealed special design for which a church of Christ is instituted be ascertained, it is obviously not possible to ascertain the precise nature of the society, and consequently the qualifications of its members. However,

5. We will suppose that, by an appeal to all the passages of the New Testament, the precise design is known; from whence the nature of a church is deduced; the question returns,—Is there any general rule that may form an invariable standard by which all qualifications of candidates may be measured? There undoubtedly is, for this plain reason; because a church is a society instituted for specific ends, revealed in the New Testament. Now as these ends are matter of divine record, and not of human opinion, the standard is invariable.

6. We will further suppose, that the general rule, by which to measure qualifications for full communion, is the scriptural design for which a gospel church in full communion is divinely instituted. No party, however they may differ about other things, can object to this rule, with any colour of reason. To deny its claim, they must either subvert the evident principles of all voluntary societies, or else hold, that a Christian church is not instituted in the New Testament for any specific end. But this no reasonable person, much less a serious Christian, will maintain. Hence,

7. Those candidates for full communion, and only those, who are conformed to this rule, are fully qualified. But here it is of essential importance to observe, that though a rule is, and from its very nature must be, fixed and invariable, the qualifications of individuals, are variable things, admitting of more or less conformity to it. The conjectures of men, however ingenious and plausible, cannot be admitted as a rule, because they are variable: but the rule must be deduced from the design itself of instituting a church, which is evidently a matter of pure divine pleasure, and which could not be known without a revelation from God. A rule, then, must be sought from the sacred oracles by an induction of particulars relating to the point in question, and from their harmonious agreement; and it is the business of every Christian church, minister and member, to search the scriptures in order to ascertain it. To contend about qualifications, before this is agreed upon, is to contend about the dimensions of different things, before a standard is fixed upon by which to measure them. But the constituent parts of the qualifications in candidates, cannot be found in scripture; they must, most evidently, be sought in the characters of the individuals, which are indefinitely variable. To suppose the character, or the actual attainment, of each candidate is revealed in scripture, is too absurd to be maintained by any rational mind. Therefore,

8. What remains for a church to do in judging of qualifications, is to compare the proficiency of the candidate with the scriptural rule. The former, admitting of indefinite degrees of approximation to the standard, must be learnt from the person himself, from his conduct, and from the testimony of others. His profession, his declared experience of divine truth, his deportment in society, in short, his general character is to be viewed, in comparison with the evident design of God in forming a church.

9. Should it be objected, that different persons, or churches, might fix on a different standard, by adding more texts of scripture out of which a various general result would arise: it is answered, that therefore this is the point to be first settled. When any disagree about the rule, they cannot of course agree about the qualifications. There are many texts, however, such as those above produced, concerning which there can be no disagreement. The rule therefore should be admitted, as far as it goes. A measure of a foot long may, as far as it goes, be a standard of straightness and of measure, as well as a yard or a fathom. Or, to change the comparison, a small measure of capacity may be equally accurate, to a certain degree, as a larger measure. Let the church of small attainments act charitably, and wait for brighter evidence. If any lack wisdom, let them ask of God, who giveth liberally. "Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded; and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing."

10. The scriptural rule is not only invariable, but also perfect in its kind, as dictated by infinite wisdom for the noblest ends. But no human character, in the present state, is perfect, so as to comport universally with the standard. Therefore no candidate for communion is perfectly qualified; that is, his qualifications are only comparative. One may be qualified in a greater, and another in a smaller degree. One is qualified to fill his place eminently, another moderately well. One may be strong, and another weak in the faith. Yet he who is weak in the faith may be comparatively qualified. Therefore,

11. Since qualifications are so various, and admit of indefinite approximations to the perfect standard, or deviations from it, we are bound to accede to another conclusion, viz. That whatever kind, or degree of qualification appears to befriend, rather than to oppose, to honour, rather than to discredit the scriptural design of full communion, ought to be admitted by the church. When a can-

didate for communion is proposed to a church, its immediate business is to consult the scriptural design of communion; and then to consider how far the qualifications of the candidate appear to befriend and to honour it.

12. From the premises it follows, that to reason from qualifications for communion in the Jewish church, to those for full communion in a gospel church, must needs be uncertain and inconclusive; except it could be first proved, that the revealed design of each was the same. But it requires no great labour to shew by an induction of particulars, that the design was very different; and consequently, that what would be a suitable qualification for the one, would not be so for the other.

13. We may further infer, that when a church requires a probable evidence of grace as the measuring rule of admission, and directs nearly all its attention to ascertain this point, its proceedings are irregular, unscriptural, and therefore unwarrantable. The rule of judging, as before shewn, must be found in the scripture, and not in the candidate.

14. We may further infer from the preceding observations, that a probable evidence of grace in a candidate, is not the precise ground of the qualification, however desirable that evidence may be. Yet, because ordinarily, and most probably, the absence of saving grace implies the absence of the precise ground of answerableness to the scriptural design of full communion, such probable evidence is of great importance. However nice this distinction may appear to some, the want of attending to it seems to have constituted the chief difference between our author and his antagonists. And, in fair investigation, another question, different from what was agitated, ought to have been first settled, viz. Whether any person, who is not visibly the subject of saving grace, can "befriend, rather than oppose, can honour, rather than discredit the scriptural design of full communion?" Fairly to answer this question in the negative, it is not enough to prove, that such a person cannot fully answer the scriptural design. But it ought to be proved, that no person destitute of such probable evidence of saving grace, in any circumstances whatever, can be found, who might befriend and honour the scriptural design of communion, rather than the contrary. This is the real hinge of the controversy.

15. It is an unscriptural notion, too much taken upon trust, that the immediate business of a church, is to form an opinion respecting the spiritual state of a person before God: as, whether he is the subject of saving grace—whether he has a principle of sincerity—whether his motives are spiritually pure, &c.—Whereas, a church ought not to act the part of a jury on the candidate's real state towards God, but on his state towards the church. They are to determine, whether he is, or is not eligible to answer the scriptural ends of such a society, and indeed of that particular church. For, as the circumstances of divers churches may be very different, there may be cases, where the same person may be eligible to one church, and not to another. In one church he may promote its welfare, in another hinder it. This may greatly depend on his peculiar tenets, and the zeal with which he may be disposed to maintain them. In one society he may be a source of disquiet and confusion, but in another the reverse.

16. Hence it is evident, that a visibility of saving grace, though it claims the Christian love and respect of the church, does not, in all cases, constitute eligible qualifications. For, whatever has an evident tendency to produce disputes, animosities and divisions in a church, ought to be kept out of it. But the admission of a person who appeared zealous for sentiments and customs opposite to those held by the church, would have this apparent tendency, notwithstanding his possessing a visibility of grace, on other accounts. Therefore, though a visibility of grace in some cases, may be sufficiently plain, yet an apparent failure in other respects may be sufficient to shew that a person is not qualified for full communion. In short, if the church have good reason to think, that his admission would do more harm than good, he should be deemed unqualified for membership in that society, though he may be entitled to a charitable opinion, or even Christian love, on other accounts; and, on the contrary, if the church have good reason to think, that his admission would do more good than harm, he should be deemed qualified for membership—even though he may be less entitled to a charitable opinion of his state towards God, than the other.

COROLLARIES.

1. Any candidate who appears, in the charitable judgment of a Christian church, likely to give a favourable representation of Christianity to the church and the world—to encourage the desirous, by his knowledge and tempers—and to give and receive Christian edification in that communion—is, in the scripture sense, qualified for full communion.

2. Personal religion, in the sight of God, is to be deemed necessary only for the sake of enabling the candidate to answer such ends,—as far as membership is concerned; but, as final salvation is concerned, personal religion is indispensably necessary; this connection being clearly revealed, as well as founded in the nature of things.

3. A Christian minister may consistently exercise holy jealousy over some church members, and warn them of the danger of hypocrisy, without threatening them with exclusion from their membership; because only their overt-acts (including sentiments, tempers, and conduct) are the object of discipline, as they were of admission.

4. Some persons, though in a safe state towards God may not answer the forementioned ends of membership, better than others who are not in such a state.

5. A person may be qualified for the society of heaven, while not qualified for full communion in a Christian church; because the natures of the two societies are different, and consequently the scriptural ends of their admission into each. For infants, or idiots, &c. may be qualified by grace for the society of heaven; but are totally unqualified for full communion in the church on earth.

6. Were Christian churches to act always on these principles, much bitter strife and useless discussions would be avoided, in the admission and exclusion of members. For, in neither the one nor the other, would the church pronounce on the state of the persons towards God; for when any were admitted, no handle would be afforded to the presumption, that membership below is a qualification for heaven—and when any were excluded, no occasion would be given to the excommunicated person, or to the world, to pass the censure of uncharitableness on the church; for every voluntary society has a right to judge, according to its own appropriate rules, who is, and who is not qualified to promote its welfare.—W.

AN APPENDIX.

BEING A LETTER TO THE PEOPLE OF THE FIRST CHURCH AND CONGREGATION IN NORTHAMPTON.

Dear Brethren,

THOUGH I am not now your pastor, yet having so long stood in that relation to you, I look on myself obliged, notwithstanding all that has of late passed between us, still to maintain a special concern for your spiritual welfare. And as your present circumstances appear to me very evidently attended with some peculiar dangers, threatening the great wounding of the interest of vital religion among you; which probably most of you are not well aware of; I look on myself called to point forth your danger to you, and give you warning. What I now especially have respect to, is the danger I apprehend you are in, from the contents of that book of Mr. W. of Lebanon, to which the foregoing performance is a reply; which I perceive has been written and published very much by your procurement, and at your expense; and so (it may naturally be supposed and expected) is dispersed in your families, and will be valued and much used by you as a book of great importance. What I regard is, not so much the danger you are in of being established by that book in your former principles, concerning the admission of members, (though I think these principles are indeed very opposite to the interest of true piety in churches;) but what I now mean is the danger there is, that while you are making much of that book as a means to maintain Mr. Stoddard's doctrine concerning the terms of communion, you, and especially your children, will by the contents of it be led quite off from other religious principles and doctrines, which Mr. S. brought you up in, and always esteemed as of vastly greater importance than his parti-

cular tenet about the Lord's supper; and be naturally led into notions and principles, which he ever esteemed as of fatal tendency to the souls of men.

By the way, I would have it observed, that when I take notice of these things in his book, my aim is not to beget in you an ill opinion of Mr. W. as though he were as corrupt in his settled persuasion, as one would be ready to think, if we were to judge only by things delivered in some parts of this book; and especially if it should be supposed, that he embraced all the consequences of what he here maintains. Men often do not see or allow the plain consequences of their own doctrines. And therefore, though I charge very pernicious consequences on some things he says, yet I do not charge him with embracing these consequences: nor will I undertake to explain how it could come to pass, that he should maintain things now in this book, in opposition to me, which are so contrary to the good and sound doctrines he has formerly delivered in other books. Let that be as it will, and however orthodox the principles may be, which he more ordinarily maintains; yet the ill and unsound things he delivers here, may do, nevertheless, hurt to you and your children, who may read this book without having in view the more wholesomes doctrine of his other writings.

For instance, you have ever been taught, that unconverted men do not really believe the gospel, are never truly convinced of its truth; and that it is of great importance that sinners should be sensible of the unbelief and atheism of their hearts. But contrary to this, Mr. W.'s book abundantly teaches you and your children this notion, That unsanctified men may really be convinced of the divine truth of the gospel, and believe it with all their hearts.

You have been ever taught, that Christless sinners, especially when under some more slight awakenings, are very ready to flatter themselves that they are willing to accept of Christ as their Saviour; but that they must be brought off from their vain imagination, and be brought to see that the fault is in their own wills, and that their not being interested in Christ is owing to their obstinacy and perverseness, and wilful wicked refusal of God's terms; on which account they are wholly inexcusable, and may justly be cast off by God. But contrary to these things, this book of Mr. W abundantly teaches you, that men in an unconverted state, may indeed cordially consent to the terms of the covenant of grace, may comply with the call of the gospel, may submit to its proposals, may have satisfaction in the offer God makes of himself as our God in Christ, may fall in with the terms of salvation propounded in the gospel, and renounce all other ways, and may sincerely and earnestly desire

salvation in this way: and that some unconverted men are not wilful obstinate sinners. (p. 21. *b.*) Which doctrines, if embraced and retained by your children as true, will tend for ever to hinder that conviction of the opposition and obstinacy of the heart, which Mr. S. ever taught you to be of such importance in order to the soul's humiliation, and thorough conviction of the justice of God in its damnation.

You have ever been taught, that the hearts of natural men are wholly corrupt, entirely destitute of any thing spiritually good, not having the least spark of love to God, and as much without all things of this nature, as a dead corpse is without life: nevertheless, that it is hard for sinners to be convinced of this; that they are exceeding prone to imagine, there is some goodness in them, some respect to God in what they do; yet that they must be brought off from such a vain conceit of themselves, and come to see themselves utterly depraved and quite dead in sin.—But now this book of Mr. W. leads you to quite other notions; it leads you to suppose, that some natural men are above lukewarmness in religion, that they may truly profess to be the real friends of Christ, and to love God, more than his enemies, and above the world.

It was a doctrine greatly inculcated on you by Mr. S. as supposing it of great importance for all to be convinced of it, that natural men are not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be; that they never do truly serve God, but are wholly under the dominion of sin and Satan. But if sinners believe Mr. W.'s book, they will not be convinced of these things; nay, they will believe quite contrary things, viz. That sinners, while in a state of nature, may have a cordial subjection to Jesus Christ, and may be subject to him with all their hearts, and may be so devoted to the service of Christ as to be above those that serve two masters, may give up themselves to be taught, ruled, and led by him in a gospel way of salvation, and may give up all their hearts and lives to him.—And is it likely, while sinners believe these doctrines of Mr. W. that they will ever be brought to a thorough humiliation, in a conviction of their being wholly under the power of enmity against God, which Mr. S. taught you to be of such great importance?

You know it was always a doctrine greatly insisted on by Mr. S. as a thing of the utmost consequence, that sinners who are seeking converting grace, should be thoroughly sensible of God's being under no manner of obligation, from any desires, labours, or endeavours of theirs, to bestow his grace upon them; either in justice, or truth, or any other way; but that when they have done all, God is perfectly at liberty, whether to shew them mercy, or not; that they are wholly in the hands of God's sove-

reignty. (See Guide to Christ, p. 75. *c. d.* and Benef. of the Gosp. p. 61. and p. 75, 76.)—Whereas, if a sinner seeking salvation believes Mr. W.'s book, it will naturally lead him to think quite otherwise. He, (in p. 28.) speaking of such sincerity and earnestness of endeavours as may be in natural men to qualify them to come to the sacrament, and of the great encouragement God has given, that he will bestow his saving grace on such as use such endeavours, adds these words, (near the bottom of the page,) "God never will be worse than his encouragement, nor do less than he has encouraged; and he has said, to him that hath shall be given." Naturally leading the awakened sinner, who is supposed to have moral sincerity enough to come to the sacrament, to suppose, that God is not wholly at liberty; but that he has given so much encouragement, that it may be depended upon he will give his grace; and that it would not be reasonable or becoming of God to do otherwise; because if God should do so, he would be worse than his encouragement, and would not fulfil that word of his, to him who hath shall be given. And how will this tend effectually to prevent the sinner looking on God as absolutely at liberty, and prevent his resigning himself wholly into the hands of God, and to his sovereign pleasure?

It is a doctrine which has ever been taught you, and used for the warning, awakening, and humbling of gospel sinners, that they have greater guilt, and are exposed to a more terrible punishment, than the heathen.—But this is spoken of by Mr. W. as an unsufferable treatment of visible saints; naturally tending to alleviate and smooth the matter in the consciences of those that are not scandalous persons, though they live in unbelief and the rejection of Christ under gospel light and mercy.

If you will believe what Mr. W. says, (p. 56.) those blessed epithets and characters in the epistles of the apostles, which you always, from the first foundation of the town, have been taught to be peculiar and glorious expressions and descriptions of the blessed qualifications and state of true saints, and heirs of eternal happiness; such as being elected, chosen before the foundation of the world, predestinated to the adoption of children through Jesus Christ; quickened, and made alive to God, though once dead in trespasses and sins; washed, sanctified, justified; made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ; begotten again, to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled;—with innumerable others the like:—I say, if you believe Mr. W. you have been quite mistaken all your days, and misled by all your ministers; these things are no more than were said of the whole nation of the Jews, even in their worst times! Which is (as I have ob-

served) exactly agreeable to the strange opinion of Mr. Taylor, of Norwich, in England, that author who has so corrupted multitudes in New England. Thus you are at once deprived of all the chief texts in the Bible, that hitherto have been made use of among you, as teaching the discriminating qualifications and privileges of the truly pious, and the nature and benefits of a real conversion; too much paving the way for the rest of Taylor's scheme of religion, which utterly explodes the doctrines you have been formerly taught concerning eternal election, conversion, justification; and so, of a natural state of death in sin; and the whole doctrine of original sin, and of the mighty change made in the soul by the redemption of Christ applied to it.

And this, taken with those other things which I have observed, in conjunction with some other things which have lately appeared in Northampton, tend to lead the young people among you apace into a liking to the new, fashionable, lax schemes of divinity, which have so greatly prevailed in New England of late: as wide as the East is from the West, from those great principles of religion, which have always been taught, and have been embraced, and esteemed most precious, and have justly been accounted very much your glory by others.

If this book of Mr. W. with all these things, is made much of by you, and recommended to your children, as of great importance to defend the principles of the town, how far has your zeal for that one tenet, respecting natural men's right to the Lord's supper, transported you, and made you forget your value and concern for the most precious and important doctrines of Jesus Christ, taught you by Mr. Stoddard, which do most nearly concern the very vitals of religion!

I beseech you, brethren, seasonably to consider how dark the cloud is that hangs over you, and how melancholy the prospect (especially with regard to the rising generation) in many respects. I have long been intimately acquainted with your religious circumstances, your notions and principles, your advantages and dangers; having had perhaps greater opportunity for it than any other person on earth.—Before I left you, it was very evident, that Arminianism, and other loose notions in religion, and Mr. Taylor's in particular, began to get some footing among you; and there were some things special in your circumstances, that threatened a great prevailing of such like notions: which if they should by degrees generally prevail, will doubtless by degrees put an end to what used to be called saving religion.

Therefore let me entreat you to take the friendly warning I now give you, and stand on your guard against the encroaching evil. If you are not inclined to hearken to me, from any re-

maining affection to one whose voice and counsels you once heard with joy, and yielded to with great alacrity; yet let me desire you not to refuse, as you would act the part of friends to yourselves and your dear children.

I am,
Dear Brethren,
He who was once (as I hope through grace)
Your faithful pastor,
And devoted servant for Jesus' sake,
J. E.

END OF VOL. IV.

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